THE JUDGMENT OF *NON-CONFORMISTS* About the DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GRACE AND MORALITY.

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THE

THE JUDGMENT OF *NON-CONFORMISTS*, &c.

WHAT advantage the Enemy of God and Man hath got againſt Truth, Holineſs, and Love, by the Diviſions of Chriſtians, and eſpecially by the Contentions of their Teachers, Experience hath been long telling the Chriſtian World, by ſmart and ſorrow: Where Envy and Strife hath begun, Confuſion and every Evil Work hath followed: Little Breaches tend to greater: The Cauſe which firſt made them, will make them wider, by calling in more Cauſes to its help and ſervice. Diſtinct *Parties* have their diſtinct *Intereſts*, as to *Commodity* and *Reputation*: And, alas! what work will *ſelfiſhneſs* and *fleſhly intereſt* make? What *Moralities*, what *Untruths*, *Injuſtice*, and *Unmercifulneſs* is it pregnant with? What Evil ſo great, that it will not firſt venture on, and then palliate, and next juſtifie, and laſtly propagate, if God do not mortifie, or reſtrain it? The foreſight of this Danger to the Land of our Nativity, moved ſome of Us to ſtrive for the prevention of it, while we thought there was place for our Endeavours: But as our labour did but

exaſperate the Diſeaſe, by our doleful and dear-bought Experience, of the progreſs and calamitous Fruits of Diſcord, in the ſpace of more than two Apprentiſhips, hath wrought no (perceived) Cure on Mens Minds, nor deliverance to the Church. The Diſcord, which began about *Worſhip* and *Diſcipline*, is by ſome now pretended to be alſo in *Doctrinals*, and about the Principles of Civil Government, and Humane Society and Peace. And whither increaſing Diſcord, by the power of *Intereſt* and *Envy*, may yet carry the Charge, or how much wider yet Dividers may perſwade the Ignorant that the Difference is, we cannot foretel: But becauſe we are ſure that all tendeth to the ruine of *Brotherly Love*, and that he that *hateth his Brother is a Murderer, and hath not eternal life abiding in him*, to ſave as many on both ſides as we can from ſuch a *damning ſin*, we take it to be our duty to detect the Errours of Contentious Dividers, and to hinder their farther widening of the Breach. Which we ſhall here attempt about this Queſtion, much agitated of late.

Queſt. *Whether the Parties called Conformiſts and Non-Conformiſts do really differ, about the nature and ſufficiency of Morality compared with the Grace of Chriſt?* Neg.

As to the Explication of our Terms, 1. What we mean by *Conformiſts* and *Non-Conformiſts*, we have lately ſhewed on another Queſtion: we mean not that if a Papiſt, or Socinian, or Quaker ſhould join either with the *Conformiſts* or *Non-Conformiſts*, they would not herein differ from others: but that they that are now called *Conformiſts* and *Non-Conformiſts* herein differ not: 1. Formally, *qua tales*; 2. No nor Materially, *qui tales*, being *meerly* ſuch.

2. We ſpeak only of the *Parties*: For as to ſome individual

vidual perſons, it cannot be expected that any Parties in the World ſhould be wholly made up of men ſo wiſe, as that none among them have Ignorance enough to wrangle in the dark.

3. The Terms [*Grace*] and [*Morality*] muſt be anon explained in our Proof.

Which Proof (as in our laſt Caſe) we fetch, I. From our common conſent to the ſacred Scriptures, the ancient Creeds, and the doctrinal Articles and Homilies of the Church of *England*; which ſurely contain all that is needful to be held about the difference of *Grace* and *Morality*. Nor hath either Party declared their diſſent by any contradiction of any of the aforeſaid Articles or Doctrines.

II. Our ſecond Proof is, by a *ſufficient explication*, and *enumeration* of the Points in which we are agreed.

I. The word GRACE is taken, 1. EFFICIENTLY, 2. OBJECTIVELY, 3. SUBJECTIVELY.

I. EFFICIENTLY, *Grace* is taken, 1. For the Efficient *principle*: 2. For the Efficient *Action* of the firſt Cauſe: 3. For the Efficient *Means* and its operation.

1. Grace taken for the Efficient *Principle*, ſignifieth *God's* efficient *Favour*, *Love*, *Mercy*, or *Will* to do good freely to the Unworthy.

2. Grace taken for *God's* Efficient *Action*, ſignifieth the ſame *Good-will* of God *ex parte ſui*, but as *connoting* the *Effect in fieri vel facto eſſe*. The former is conſidered as *Decreeing* or meerly *Willing*; but this as *Effecting*.

3. Grace taken for the *Efficient Means*, is an *effect* of *God's free Love*, and a *ſecond Cauſe* of Man's ſanctification, and hath many parts; of which CHRIST as Mediator is the Head or Chief, and his Goſpel, Miniſters, Sacraments,

Sacraments, and Providences are inferior ſubſervient parts: All which are the Efficient Grace of God.

II. OBJECTIVELY, Grace is all God's free-given Mercy as it is offered and propoſed to Man's actual *Belief*, *Acceptance*, and *Improvement*, (or uſe.)

Even as the word *Fides* ſignifieth, 1. The *fidelity* or *truſtineſs* of God the *Promiſer* or *Revealer*: 2. The *fidelity* or *truſtineſs* of the *word* promiſing or aſſerting: 3. The Belief or Truſt of the Believer; (*Fidem promittentis*, *fidem promiſſi*, *& fidem credentis*.) So the word GRACE hath the like three ſignifications: 1. The Grace of the *Giver*. 2. The Grace of the extrinſick *Gift*. 3. The intrinſick Grace of the *Receiver*.

This Objective *Grace*, or *Free-Gift*, is, 1. *God himſelf*, as offered us Relatively through Chriſt to be our reconciled God and Father, with his Love, and our Relation to him as his Children. 2. Chriſt himſelf, to be our Head and Saviour, and our Relation to him, as his juſtified, ſaved Members. 3. The *Holy Ghoſt* to be our Sanctifier, our Relation to him and his Grace as offered: This is the Grace offered and given us in Baptiſm by Covenant, on Gods part. Under theſe are the *Objective Means* (the Goſpel as it is to be believed, the ſanctified Mercies of this preſent life, the Ordinances as to be uſed, *&c.*) and ultimately, Heaven as the end of all: Glory freely given being the perfection of ſubjective Grace, and as propoſed and offered being the perfection of objective Grace.

III. SUBJECTIVELY, GRACE is, 1. *Gracious* Diſpoſitions and Habits; 2. *Gracious Acts*; *viz.* 1. Of the *Intellect*, 2. The *will*, 3. The *Executive* power in practiſe. The word GRACE hath in the uſe of Divines all theſe ſignifications, beſides ſeveral ſub-diviſions which the Schoolmen ordinarily make.

And

And in Scripture, I. For Efficient Grace, ſee *Exod.* 34. 6. and 33. 29. *Num.* 6. 25. *Neh.* 9. 17. 31. *Job* 33. 24. *Pſal.* 86. 15. and 103. 8. and 112. 4. *Iſa.* 30. 18, 19. *Joel* 2. 13. *Jon.* 4. 2. 1 *Pet.* 2. 3. *Heb.* 4. 16. and 10. 29. *Eph.* 1. 6, 7. and 2. 5. 7, 8. and 6. 24. 2 *Cor.* 12. 9. *Rom.* 11. 5, 6. and 5. 2. and 1. 7. and 4. 16. *Acts* 15. 40. *Heb.* 29.

II. For objective Grace, ſee *Gal.* 1. 6. and 5. 4. and 2. 21. *Jud.* 4. 1 *Pet.* 3. 7. and 1. 10. 13. *Joh.* 1. 17. *Acts* 20. 24. 32. and 14. 3. *Rom.* 6. 14, 15. *Tit.* 2. 11. *Heb.* 12. 15. 1 *Pet.* 4. 10. and 5. 12.

III. For Subjective Grace, ſee 2 *Pet.* 3. 18. 1 *Pet.* 5. 5. *Jam.* 4. 6. *Heb.* 12. 28. and 13. 9. *Col.* 3. 16. and 4. 6. *Eph.* 4. 7. 29. and 3. 8. *Gal.* 2. 9. 2 *Cor.* 8. 6, 7. and 9. 8. *Joh.* 1. 16. *&c.*

II. The words [MORALITY] and [MORAL] have alſo divers ſignifications.

I. In the firſt moſt comprehenſive and moſt famous ſenſe, MORALITY, as diſtinguiſhed from meer *Naturality* or Phyſicks, doth ſignifie the Relation of the *Manners* or *Acts* of an Intelligent free Agent to the Governing Will and Law of God: And ſo *Actus morales* and *Actus humani* are uſed in the ſame ſenſe; and all Morality is diſtinguiſhed into *Moral Good* and *Moral Evil*, *Virtue* and *Vice*.

II. Some have uſed MORALITY in a narrower ſenſe, unfitly, for ſo much of Man's duty as is *revealed* by the *meer Law of Nature*, and as is of common obligation to lapſed Mankind: And ſo it comprehendeth the *relicts* of the Law of *Innocent Nature* (to *love God and obey him*, *&c.*) and the *additional Law* of *Lapſed Nature*, (to *Repent*, and uſe all poſſible means for our *recovery*, and thankfully improve the Mercies which we receive.) And thus

thus it is distinguished from Duty *known* by *supernatural Revelation*, and especially the Mysteries of Redemption by Jesus Christ.

III. Some use the word (improperly also) for *all that Duty* which is of *perpetual Obligation*, whether by *natural* or *supernatural Revelation*: And so it is distinguished from *Temporary Duties*: And thus the *Lords-Day*, *Baptism*, the *Lords-Supper*, a *Gospel Ministry*, Scripture (to be used) *discipline*, are said to be *Moral-Positives*, distinct from meer *Natural Duties*, and from *Temporaries*.

IV. Lastly, Some, yet more unaptly, confine the sense to the Duties of our common Conversation *towards man*, as distinct from *Holiness* or our Duty to God: And so they distinguish a meer *moral honest* man, from a *godly* or *religious* man.

Though we wish that the needless use of words improperly were not the common Fuel of vain Contendings, yet we being not the Masters of Language, must take words as we find them used, and leave all men arbitrarily to use them as they please, so be it they will but tell us what they mean by them, before they lay any stress on them in disputing.

In reference to these various senses of these words, we suppose that we are all agreed as followeth.

I As to MORALITY in the first and most famous signification, we are agreed, 1. That all proper *Humane Acts* are *moral*, that is, *morally Good* or *Evil*: And all *Duty* and *Sin*, *Virtue* and *Vice*, in *Habit* and *Act*, *Positive* and *Privative* Vice, are parts of *Morality*; *moral Good* directly, and *moral Evil* reductively and consequently.

2. *Holiness to the Lord*, or the *Love of God as God*, is the chief part of Morality; and what Duty soever is *Evangelical* and *spiritual* is also *moral*. 3. No-

3. Nothing is morally laudable or rewardable, but Moral Good; and nothing is puniſhable, but Moral Evil.

4. All *Morality* is ſeated primarily in the *will*, but is ſecondarily (as flowing thence) in the imperate Acts of the Intellect, and inferior Faculties.

5. All *truly moral Good in lapſed man*, is, 1. From God's *Efficient Grace*. 2. And exerciſed on ſome *Objective Grace*. And, 3. Is it ſelf *Subjective Grace*, either *ſpecial* or *common*.

6. The *Good* called *Moral* in Infidels, and all other ungodly unſanctified men, is ſuch but *ſecundum quid*, and not *ſimpliciter*, nor in the full or propereſt ſenſe: Becauſe *bonum eſt ex omnibus Cauſis eſſentialibus*: And a good *Principle*, *Rule*, *End*, *and right Object*, eſpecially the *formal Object*, are all eſſential to a truly good moral Act: But every ungodly man in every Action doth want at leaſt ſome one of theſe. And an Act is denominated in Morality from that which is prevalent in it, and not from every conquered depreſt ingredient: We ſay not that he that killeth his Father or Prince, with the reluctancy of better thoughts and inclinations, doth therein do a *good work*, though that *reluctancy* was good: So he that hath *ſome Love* to *God* and *Goodneſs*, but *more Hatred*; and *more love* to *ſinful pleaſure*; doth not a work properly *Good*, which proceedeth from ſuch a mixed Cauſe. But the evil Principle and End is predominant in all ungodly men.

7. But materially, and *ſecundum quid*, bad men may do Works that are *morally good*, and phyſically *very good* to *others*; as Governing and Protecting Common-wealths and Churches, building Cities and Temples, and Hoſpitals, relieving the Poor, preaching the Goſpel, expounding Scripture, defending Truth, promoting Learning;

and in good Nature, Patience, Meekneſs, Temperance, Chaſtity, Wit, and Induſtry; they may be commendable and exemplary, and their Precepts and Practice may conduce much to the good of others.

8. Whatever good is found in Heathens or Infidels, or ungodly Men, is to be acknowledged and praiſed proportionably according to its real worth; it being all from God, who muſt not be robbed of his praiſe.

9. A Man that hath but *Common Grace* is better than he would be if he had none, and it is the uſual preparatory for ſpecial ſaving Grace. Though many civil temperate perſons, by overvaluing *Common Good*, are hindred from ſeeking Special Grace, that is not *cauſed* by the *Good*, but by their abuſe of it objectively. And though God take *occaſion* from ſome mens great ſins, to affright their Conſciences to Repentance and Reformation, that is not *cauſed* by the ſin, but by Gods Mercy: *Sin* as *remembred* is *not ſin* in the act of *remembring*, nor ſin as *repented* of in *repenting*; but *before* in the *committing*. God may Convert *Paul* in the act of Perſecuting: But Perſecuting is not the way or means of Converſion. Special Grace muſt be ſought in the uſe of Common Grace, and not in a way of negligence, contempt, or wilful ſin.

II. Of MORALITY in the ſecond ſenſe (as taken for *Natural Duties*, which all Mankind is obliged to by Natural Revelation of God's Will) we are agreed, as followeth.

1. The ſum of this *Natural* Morality or Duty, is to love God as God for himſelf, and all things elſe for him, even as being *of Him*, and *through Him*, and *to Him*; to obey God, and make it our chief care to pleaſe him, and

and therein to place and ſeek our Happineſs, even in everlaſting mutual love: To love others as our ſelves, and do all the good we can to all for Soul and Body, eſpecially to the moſt publick Societies; to do juſtly, and as we would be done by; to uſe our Bodies as the Servants of our Souls, and Soul and Body as the Servants of God: And to hate and avoid all that is *contrary* to theſe. This Natural Evidence will prove to be the Common Duty of Mankind.

2. This Love to God and Man before deſcribed is true *Holineſs*; that is, The Soul's ſeparation and devotedneſs to God.

3. All the *Evidence* which *Nature* affordeth us herein, is not ſeen by all men that are of natural Wit or Induſtry, no more than all that is revealed by the Scripture is known to all that read the Scripture, or that believe it.

4. *Holineſs* is the *End* of *Medicinal Grace*, as uſed by *Chriſt on us*, and as uſed *by us towards Chriſt* as the Mediator: Faith in Chriſt is to kindle in us the holy love of God, and obedience to him: Love therefore as the final and everlaſting Grace, is preferred by the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 12. laſt *v.* and 13. throughout.

5. Even our Faith in Chriſt, and our Obedience to the Goſpel (in Preaching, Sacraments, and ſuch like) are neither only of *natural*, nor only of *ſupernatural Obligation*, but *mixt*: *Chriſt* and his Ordinances are *ſupernaturally revealed*; but being once *revealed*, with the Evidence of Divine Authority, *natural Revelation* then telleth us that it is our Duty to believe and obey.

6. That which is of *Natural Revelation and Obligation*, muſt be performed by *ſupernatural Grace*. Though Nature prove that all Men ſhould love God as God, it is Grace that muſt diſpoſe and enable them to do it.

7. We call Grace *ſupernatural*, not only becauſe it is not eſſential to Nature (no not to *Adam* in innocency) but becauſe in our lapſed ſtate it is not conveyed to us by *Natural Generation*; but Nature in the ſtate of pravity is deprived of it; and becauſe God worketh it by the free gift of his Spirit, in a manner beyond the ſearch of man, and by it, as an effect of his love, doth make us lovely, (in our union and relation to Chriſt who ſanctifieth and juſtifieth us) it being his Image on the Soul, which no meer Natural Cauſes, without this operation of God's Love and Spirit, can effect.

But yet, 1. We all agree that Holineſs is *Nature's health* or rectitude, and therefore ſutable to it as its perfection, as health is to the Body. 2. And that the Spirit of God doth ordinarily make uſe of his *appointed means*, and eſpecially his Word, for our ſanctification. And theſe being *ſecond Cauſes*, which have their *proper Natures*, may ſo far be called *natural Cauſes*: And that *thus far Grace* may be ſaid to be *Natural*.

8. This *Holy Love* being the *final Act*, on God the *final Object*, and ſo being man's *felicity it ſelf*, it followeth, that all men have *ſo much happineſs conſtitutively*, as they have *holy love to God and Goodneſs*; and that no man can be *damned* that hath the ſaid *predominant holy Love*, while ſuch: And that ſuch have no cauſe to fear damnation, any farther than they ſhould fear leſt by forfeiting Gods Grace they ſhould loſe that love.

9. The *Mediation* of *Chriſt*, and our *Faith* in him, who is the Glaſs, the Meſſenger, and the great Gift of the Fathers Love, are the *Means* appointed by God to ſanctifie us, by the effecting of this Love, with all its Concomitants and Fruits.

10. There-

10. Therefore as God is called [*All in All*] ſo Chriſt is called [*All in all,*] *Col.* 3. 11. to Believers, as being the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

11. Therefore they that would bring men to the *holy* and *felicitating Love of God*, muſt preach Jeſus Chriſt and his Grace to them, as the means, and bring them to believe in him, and to take it for their Wiſdom to know Chriſt crucified, and glorified, and to learn of him, and obey him, and truſt in him, and daily to uſe him as their Mediator for acceſs to God, acceptance with him, and communication from him.

12. To preach up the bleſſedneſs of Saints and excellency of holineſs, without teaching men how to attain it *by Chriſt*, is but to commend health to the ſick, without directing them to the *Phyſician* and the *Remedies*: And to hear of a *Sanctity and Felicity* not *attainable*, is to be tormented by deſpair: And to think to obtain it by our *works* or endeavours, without a *Mediator* and his *Grace* (or by any other Mediator than Chriſt,) is the way to loſe it by falſe preſumption, and neglect of the neceſſary means: It being *Chriſt that is made of God to us, Wiſdom, Righteouſneſs, Sanctification, and Redemption.*

13. As Chriſt on Earth did purchaſe us this Salvation by his *meritorious Righteouſneſs and Sacrifice*; and is now in Heaven our Head and Interceſſor, and the Treaſury of Grace and Life to Believers, ſo he ſanctifieth us by his WORD and SPIRIT; and herein differeth from all other Teachers that ever were in the World, 1. That his Goſpel (Doctrine, Precepts, and Covenant-promiſes) are ſingularly ſuited to this ſanctifying work. 2. That he ſendeth forth his Spirit with it, to work the Souls of men to that which he teacheth

and

and commandeth, that ſo they may be effectually *taught of God:* Without the *Spirit* of *Jeſus* no *word* or *means* will ſanctifie and renew a Soul.

14. Therefore all Preachers muſt jointly preach GOD and holy LOVE, (truſt, obedience, and delight in him) as the END, and CHRIST and *faith in him*, and *learning of him*, and *obeying him* in the uſe of his healing Remedies, as the MEANS: This being *life eternal, to know the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom he hath ſent*, Joh. 17. 3.

15. And though the *End* muſt be preached as more excellent than the *Means*, yet the *Means* muſt be preached as more *myſterious*, and above meer natural Revelation. Experience telleth us, that all men quickly learn to confeſs that they ſhould *repent of ſin*, and *love God as God*; but they are hardly taught to underſtand the Myſtery of Redemption, the Perſon, Incarnation, Works, Office, and Grace of the Redeemer; and therefore have here need of longer teaching: The *Grace* of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the *Love* of God the Father, and the *Communion* of the Holy Spirit, muſt be the Preachers ſubject, as it is the Chriſtians benediction and felicity.

16. There are things in *Ariſtotle*'s Ethicks, and in the Ethicks of the Stoicks and and ſome other Philoſophers, of great worth and uſe to Chriſtians, to ſhew us what by natural evidence may be diſcerned: But they are all poor, defective, ſpirit-leſs Doctrines and Precepts, in Compariſon of the Goſpel of Chriſt, though to carnal wit they ſeem to excel it in Method, Language, and ſeveral Curioſities: And the Writings of Chriſtians, who do but expound and apply Chriſt's Doctrine, do far excel all the Heathens Ethicks.

17. We have no reaſon to think that any of the Heathens

thens underſtood *all* that *Nature* it ſelf by way of *proving-Evidence* revealeth: Yea, or that any *Chriſtians perfectly* underſtand it; becauſe natural evidences are exceeding numerous, and none can ſay that he ſeeth them all; and they are of various degrees, ſome plain, and ſome obſcure; and even *natural verities*, as they ariſe from the great Branches, into innumerable Partitions as ſmaller Sprigs, are not perfectly diſcernable by a mortals Eye.

18. Therefore no knowledge of Man, much leſs any Heathens Writings, are the certain meaſure of natural verities, in Morality, by which the number and certainty of the obſcurer Particles may be known.

19. Though Heathens know and teach, that we muſt *Love God and Goodneſs* above all: And all that ſincerely love God and Goodneſs ſhall certainly be ſaved: Yet this Confeſſion will but more condemn them, that *have not, and practice not* what they teach; but, when they profeſs to know God, by their works deny him, and are void of true ſanctifying Grace.

20. Therefore it is intolerable in thoſe that are ſtiled the *Miniſters of Chriſt*, and *Preachers of the Goſpel*, to preach little more than what Heathens teach; and when they ſpeak of *Chriſtianity and Faith*, and ſhould open the *Myſteries of the Goſpel*, to do it as drily, ſcantly, and heartleſly, as if it were done but on the bye, and for Cuſtom or Faſhion ſake, rather than as a matter of the neceſſity and importance before deſcribed.

In all this we are agreed.

III. As to MORALITY in the third ſenſe (as it ſignifieth *Naturals* and *Poſitives* of perpetual Obligation) we are agreed, 1. That all to whom they are promulgate are obliged to the practice of them. 2. And that for

that

that Practice we need the *fore-described* helps of Grace; even *efficient, objective, and subjective Grace:* For saving Practice special Grace, and for common Practice common Grace.

IV. And as to the fourth Sense of MORALITY (as signifying only our Duty to *Man*, as distinct from holiness to God) we are agreed,

1. That as the Love of our Neighbour as our selves is the second great Commandment like to the first, so the practice of this in our Duty towards Man, proceeding from *Love and Obedience to God*, is the second part of our Duty, and to be preached and practised accordingly.

2. And it is that part, about a near discernable Object, by which our Love to God must be *expressed* and made *known*; and by which it shall, by Christ himself, be judged of at the last day.

3. And it is that *Matter* in which God will have our obedience to him to be carefully and constantly exercised: Because God needeth us not himself, but as his Government of Man is his ordering us to our own good and felicity, so he obligeth us to do good to our selves, and one another.

4. But as Man without God is *nothing, and no Man*; so *Duty and Love to Man*, not depending on *Duty and Love to God*, is no *Duty*, no *Morality* at all: And as to love, honour, or *obey Man* above God, as the best or *greatest*, is damnable Idolatry, or Rebellion against God; so to preach up Love, Honour, and Obedience to Man, as separated from, or not dependent on our Love, Honour, and Obedience to God (much more as *above him*, or *against him*) were but to preach up Idolatry, or Rebellion. No Man can love Man for Gods sake, that loveth not God more;

more; And no Man can *honour or obey* Man for Gods ſake, who doth not more *honour and obey* God. He that will ſerve Man more than God, doth as it were make Man his God, and from Man muſt expect his Protection, Proviſion, and Reward.

5. Profeſſion of Piety to God without true Juſtice and Charity to man, is but Hypocriſie. While we have time we muſt do good (as we are able) to all Men, for with ſuch Sacrifice God is well pleaſed, *Gal. 6. Heb.* 13. Chriſt was our great Pattern in doing good, even to the unworthy, and he purifieth to himſelf a peculiar People zealous of good works, *Tit.* 2. 14. For we are his workmanſhip, created unto good works in Chriſt Jeſus, which God hath ordained that we ſhould walk in them, *Eph.* 2. 10. To be rich in good works is to be rich to God, *Luke* 12. 21. and to lay up a good Foundation for the time to come, to lay hold on eternal Life, to lay up our Treaſure in Heaven, and to make us Friends of (that which to worldlings is) the unrighteous Mammon; and bleſſed are the merciful, for they ſhall obtain mercy; and receiving a Prophet in the name of a Prophet, or a righteous Man in the name of a righteous Man, is the way to have a Prophets, or a righteous mans reward, when Chriſt will ſay, In as much as ye did it to one of the leaſt of theſe my Brethren, ye did it unto me. Pure Religion and undefiled, is to viſit the Fatherleſs and Widdows in their Adverſity, and to keep our ſelves unſpotted of the World.

As we verily believe that not only the Parties called *Conformiſts*, and *Non-Conformiſts* (alas! that we muſt call them Parties) but moſt true Proteſtants are agreed in all this, ſo we take it to be our Duty to profeſs our diſſent from the Practice of ſuch as would hinder Love

and Concord by perſwading men that we are really diſagreed when it is not ſo. And as we are the Believing Diſciples of the Prince of Peace, that bleſſed Reconciler, who took down the Partition-wall between *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and made them one, ſo we would ſerve him with all our power and intereſt, in building up the Wall of Defence, and taking down every *Partition-wall*, which unjuſtly divideth the Church of Chriſt; and dayly pray that God would humble, convert, and reform thoſe men who have built them up, and will not yet be intreated to give peace to the Churches, and in ſpecial to this ſelf-diſtracting Land.

FINIS.

THE JUDGMENT OF NON-CONFORMISTS OF THINGS INDIFFERENT Commanded by AUTHORITY,

As far as the Subſcribers are acquainted with it.

Written to ſave the Ignorant from the temptations of Diabolism, (deſcribed 2 *Tim.* 3. 3. and 1 *Joh.* 3. 10. 12. 15. *Joh.* 8. 44.)

Bleſſed are the Peace-makers, for they ſhall be called the Children of God. Matth. 5. 9.

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THE JUDGMENT OF *NON-CONFORMISTS* OF Things Indifferent Commanded by Authority.

Queſt. *WHether things antecedently lawful do therefore become unlawful, becauſe commanded by Lawful Authority?* Neg.

We take the Queſtion as we hear it ſtated by ſome Accuſers of the Non-conformiſts, who feign them to affirm it: And ſome ſeem ſerious in the Fiction, as if they did indeed believe themſelves; by which they diſpatch theſe ſeveral works of no ſmall moment; *viz.*

1. They hereby render the Non-Conformiſts contemptible and odious, as Brain-ſick Perſons, who keep up a dividing Faction in ſpight of the Light and Obligation of the Common Principles of Humanity and Society.

2. They hereby imprint the Stamp of Satan, *viz.* the

the *hatred of their Brethren*, upon the minds of ſuch hearers as will believe them, and receive the Impreſs.

3. They hereby fill Families, Cities, and Countries, with all that Spawn of ugly ſins, which are the genuine Fruits of ſuch hatred and contempt, and keep men alſo from *Repentance* for any thing that they have ſaid or done (how cruelly ſoever) againſt ſuch Miniſters, and others, as are repreſented as ſo odious to them.

4. They hereby fortifie the Peoples Souls againſt receiving converting, or edifying inſtruction, by ſuch accuſed Miniſters.

5. They furniſh Papiſts, Infidels, and other Adverſaries, with Matter of Accuſation againſt one part of the Miniſters and Servants of Chriſt: They are able now to ſay, that ſuch and ſuch Proteſtant Clergy-men themſelves reported it.

6. They tempt the worſer and weaker ſort of the accuſed, to return the like meaſure to them again, and to judge as they are judged: Satan hereby gets Matter for a Temptation, to call the Accuſers *Fools* in revenge, to bring them to the danger mentioned, *Mat.* 5. 22. and to hate their Brethren for *hating* them, that they may be *as Murderers*, that *have not eternal Life abiding in them*, 1 Joh. 3. 15.

7. And laſtly, they hereby perhaps quiet their own Conſciences, and deceive themſelves; or at leaſt for a while, with ſome, preſerve their Reputations, by making it believed, that their *Conformity*, or difference from the *Non-Conformiſts*, conſiſteth but in the rejection of ſuch wild Opinions, as the Affirmers hold; and in being the wiſe Spectators of ſuch as *are beſide themſelves*.

But the Sun will ariſe after the longeſt, and the darkeſt Night: In the mean time this Candle may ſerve the formerly

merly deceived Reader, to ſave his Soul from the mortal ſin, *of hating his Brethren wrongfully*, which falſe Accuſers would tempt him to be guilty of.

The Terms need little Explication: 1. We call things here [*Lawful* and *Unlawful*] in reſpect to the Laws of God: For as to the Laws of Men the Affirmation of the Queſtion, were but a mad Contradiction.

2. We ſpeak of that which is *Antecedently* Lawful as Cloathed with all its Accidents, ſave this ſubſequent one (being commanded by Authority) And that the Queſtion is, *whether the Command of Authority be an Accident that rendereth it Unlawful.*

3. We take [*Lawful Authority*] to be a Tautologie; (for all *Authority is Lawful*, being in the Senſe in the Queſtion nothing elſe, but a *Jus Regendi*; and [*Jus Juſtum*, or a *Lawful Right*] is a Tautologie: If it be not *Lawful*, or a *Jus*, it is but equivocally called *Authority*:) Yet becauſe the equivocal uſe of the Word, may to ſome need ſuch an Expoſitory Epithete, it may here be born.

And we ſuppoſe that the Word ſignifieth [*Authority over the Perſons, and in General*, over the Affairs in Queſtion; ſo that you may ſee firſt here what *is not* the Queſtion, and thereby the more eaſily perceive what it is.

1. The Queſtion is not of a thing before Lawful meerly as an *Act in genere, vel ſpecie*, but Unlawful by *ſome other Accident*, *e. g.* It is Lawful to kill, and to *kill a Man*, (elſe none could be put to death for Capital Crimes;) but it is Unlawful to kill *a juſt Man*: And if Rulers Command it, it is ſtill Unlawful; but not *becauſe* it is Commanded by them, but becauſe it is *forbidden of God.* It is Lawful to *forbear preaching*, (elſe *Women* might not forbear;) but not for a true *Miniſter of Chriſt*

to

to forbear it, when mens Souls notoriously need his preaching, and he is able *consideratis considerandis* to perform it: If *then* Rulers forbid it him, it is still *Unlawful* to forbear; but not *because* they forbid him, but because God *Commandeth him in season, and out of season, instantly to preach*, 2 Tim. 4. 1, 2.

2. The Question is not of the Command of *Usurpers, Civil, or Ecclesiastical*: For *their Command* sometimes may make a thing Antecedently Lawful to become *Unlawful*, by Accident, at that time, and to that Person. As it is Lawful in it self to *meet an Usurper*, and to put off the *Hat to him*, and to *give him Money*; but if he by *pretended Authority* Command the Kings Subjects to *appear before him* as *their King*, or to put *off the Hat* in token of *subjection* to him, or to pay him *Tribute* as his Subjects, it is an Unlawful owning of him, so far to obey him.

It is in it self Lawful to *go to Rome*, but not in *obedience to the Pope*, who is an *Usurper*, if he Command it us. It is in it self Lawful to take an *Oath*, yea an Oath of *Obedience* (viz. *To the King*:) But if the Pope, or one of his *Prelates* would Command the *Kings Subjects* to take an Oath of *Obedience to him*; yea, or to *perform Obedience as such*, it may become Unlawful so to own his Usurpation.

It is Lawful, and a Duty, to be justly obedient to a *true Pastor*, or *Bishop* of the Church: But if *Arrians* be obtruded on *Antioch*, *Alexandria*, *Cesarea*, and other Eastern Churches, even by the Emperour *Valens*, the Churches will resolutely refuse to obey, or hear them: Or if *sede vacante* one intrude without a true *Call*, and will tyranically make himself a Pastor, or is obtruded by the *Pope*, or other Foreign Power, without the *consent of the Church* (either the *Clergie*, or the *Flocks*) or any one

one that hath *true power to chuſe him to that place or Office*, it may be a ſin to own ſuch an Uſurper, though by an Action Lawful in it ſelf.

3. The Queſtion is not of men that have Lawful *Authority over others*, and not *over the Perſon in Queſtion*: The King of *France* may have Lawful Authority *there*, and yet no Authority to Command us in *England*.

4. Nor is the Queſtion of a Ruler that hath Authority in *other matters*, but not *in the matters now in Queſtion*. For as *Rich. Hooker* ſaith, Though a man be a Lawful Governour, yet if he extend his Commands beyond his Authority, and Command that which he hath no true power to Command, it is not diſobeying Authority, therein to diſobey him: *e. g.* If the Judge of the *Common-Pleas* Command that which is proper to the Judges of the *Kings-Bench*, *extra proprium forum*, they have no Authority. If a *Biſhop* would command Husband-men when to Plow and Sow, and with what Seed; and what Cloaths to wear, and what Meat to eat in particular; or all Phyſitians what Phyſick to give each Patient; theſe Commands are *Uſurpations*, and make *no Duty*: Nay unleſs *greater Accidents preponderate* to make the *thing needful* on ſome other accounts, it may do ſomewhat towards the making of an Act otherwiſe Lawful to *become Unlawful*, when the doing it will *encourage and ſtrengthen ſuch Uſurpers*, and be a *ſcandalous ſeeming* to own their Uſurpation. So if a Juſtice would preſume to arrogate the power of a Judge, or a Conſtable of a Juſtice, or a Church-warden of a Conſtable, or a Magiſtrate of the Paſtors of the Church, *&c.*

But becauſe it ſeemeth doubtful, whether the Queſtion be of one that hath Authority to Command the *Lawful thing in Queſtion*; or only of one that hath Au-

thority in *General, whether his Authority extend to the Point in Queſtion:* and if not, *whether his Command make the Act Unlawful to be done:* We ſhall include what we aſſert in theſe Propoſitions, which will ſhew what it is that we deny.

Pr. 1. *To queſtion whether it be Lawful, yea or a Duty, to obey them whom we ſuppoſe to have Authority to Command the very thing queſtioned, is but to queſtion the ſame thing which we firſt affirm; and to deny it, is to deny what we firſt affirm.*

For to have *Authority to Command* an Action, is nothing elſe but to have Authority to *oblige me to do that Action* by Command. And is it a wiſe Mans Queſtion, whether he that hath Authority to oblige me by his Command to do an *Action*, doth not, by making it my Duty, make it become Unlawful? That is, whether *Duty* be *Sin*, whether Life be Death, and Light be Darkneſs? Why ſhould Men be feigned ſo mad, as to argue at this rate?

Pr. 2. *If the Queſtion be, whether any Ruler have power to Command a thing which would be no Duty, but indifferent, if he did not Command it? It is to queſtion that which all ſober Perſons muſt aſſert, in the disjunctive uſe of Things, or Actions, as to each other.* That is,

1. Nothing is to be done or commanded, that is not *good before*, or *made good and uſeful by the Command:* Idle Laws are not good, if idle words be bad.

2. The *End and Benefit* of an Action may be *neceſſary*, and the *commanding* of an Action or Circumſtance before indifferent, (comparatively as to others,) may be *disjunctively neceſſary*, (either *this or that*;) and the indifferency taken away, and the thing made *both Naturally and Morally good*, by the Determination of the Command.

For

For Inſtance: It is *neceſſary* that the *Army keep together, and march in Unity and Order*: It is therefore *neceſſary* that they all meet, or Rendezvous at *one determinate certain place*; and it is *neceſſary* that they meet at one determinate *certain time, or day*: It is therefore *neceſſary* that *one certain place and time be determined*: By *Conſent* it will not be: It is therefore *neceſſary* that it be done by *Command*. None of this is *indifferent*: But the *place, and day*, may be antecedently ſo indifferent, that no Man can ſee a Reaſon, *why one, rather than the other* ſhould be *choſen*; no more than why of two equal Eggs I ſhould chuſe this, rather than the other. In this caſe it is not properly *chuſing*, but *taking*: I do not *chuſe* this *rather* than *the other*, there being no *preference* of *Eſteem*; but only I *take this, and not the other*; becauſe *I muſt take one*, and I *muſt take but one*. And when the indifferent *Place and Time* is determined of, it *then*, and *thereby*, is made *profitable to the End*, which is *Unity* and *Order*. Thus far things *neceſſary in genere* (*this or that disjunctively*) and *unneceſſary* antecedently in *particular* (*this* no more neceſſary than *that*,) may be commanded by Authority, and are *thereby* made *Naturally uſeful*, and *Morally the Subjects Duty*.

Pr. 3. *If the Queſtion be only in matters of God's Worſhip or Religion, whether the ſame hold there; we affirm that it there holdeth alſo.* Which we thus explain.

1. No Ruler hath Authority to forbid what God commandeth, or to command what God forbiddeth, as to Action, or any Circumſtance of an Action.

2. No Man can command by pretence of an Authority co-ordinate with God's, but only derived, and ſubordinate.

3. No Man can do any thing which God hath ap-

propriated to himſelf as his own proper work; as to make Univerſal Laws for the whole World, or Church; to make another Goſpel, Divine Covenant, or Sacraments of Gods Covenant; to add to, or diminiſh, or alter the Word of God; to alter the Miniſtry, Church-ſtate, or Laws which he hath made, or to make the like; or to change his Inſtitutions.

4. No Man can command any thing, but what God giveth him Authority to command; for there is no Power but of God.

5. But God giveth Men Authority to command things *before indifferent in his Worſhip*, ſuch as we before deſcribed about Civil or Military things: That is, It is *neceſſary* that the Worſhip of God be *orderly* performed in Sacred Aſſemblies; and that *Unity* and *Concord* be there kept: It is therefore neceſſary that many meet in the *ſame Place*, and the *ſame Time*, and uſe the *ſame Tranſlation* of Scripture at that time, and the *ſame Metre* and *Tune* of Pſalms, and hear the *ſame Preacher* on the *ſame Text*, and the *ſame Sermon*; and that the Preacher at *that time* uſe the *ſame words and Method of Prayer and Sermon to them all*, whether by Notes, or without, *&c.* But whether it be *this place or that*, *this day and hour or that*; *this Tranſlation*, *Metre*, *Tune*, *or that*; *this Chapter*, *Text*, *Method*, *words*, *or that*, may be *indifferent before*, *and needful and a Duty* to the People *after the Determination* of the Ruler, to whom it doth belong.

Pr. 4. *If a Ruler do not Act quite out of the Matter or Circuit of his own Juriſdiction*, *about a thing which belongeth not to him*, *nor by his Determination of Circumſtances ſubvert the thing Circumſtantiated*, *and the very End or Work it ſelf*; *though he miſs it in a Work which belongeth to his Office*, *and do it not the beſt way*, *but be culpable*

pable in his Command, the Subject yet may be bound to do what is ſo commanded, and is not excuſed by the faultineſs of the Rulers determining Commands. Which we thus explain.

1. It belongeth not to a King to *govern a Mans thoughts.* Therefore if he make Laws for our *thoughts*, it is doubted by many, whether they oblige; unleſs as he is the Official Promulgator of *God's Laws*, or *exhort* Men to *obey them*: Yet knowing that he *is God's Miniſter for our good*, if he ſhould Miniſterially command us not to think ill of God, or well of wickedneſs, *&c.* we will not concur with thoſe that affirm, that *no ſecondary* Obligation ariſeth from his Command; as long as we all hold, that if a *Church-Paſtor Miniſterially as Chriſt's Officer*, forbid blaſphemous, malicious, filthy thoughts, and *Command* holy meditation, and mental Prayer and Thanksgiving, *his Miniſterial* Command hath an anſwerable Obligation. It ſufficeth us therefore to ſay, that Kings cannot *puniſh Men*, or *reward them* for their *thoughts*; which is from their *Natural Incapacity* of *knowing* them: For could they *know* a *Thoughtful Plot of Treaſon*, or a *wiſe* and honeſt *contrivance* or *deſign* for *Publick good*, we cannot ſay that they might not anſwerably *puniſh* and *reward* them.

But to go to clearer Inſtances: It belongeth to the King to give *general regulating* Laws to *Phyſicians*, to *Mariners*, to *Parents*, to *Nurſes*, to *Farriers*, to *Brewers*, *Bakers*, *Cooks*, *&c.* He may forbid Phyſicians the uſe of ſome dangerous Drugs; and Mariners ſome times, and places, that are unſafe; and Parents, and Nurſes, to give their Children ſome pernicious Food, or wicked Counſel or Education; and Brewers, Bakers, and Cooks, to poiſon Men, or deceive them in the mat-

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ter of their Trades. But if he make ſuch Laws as take theſe Mens Callings out of their hands; If he will chuſe a Phyſician for every Patient, and the Medicines that every Phyſician ſhall uſe, with Doſe, Time, and other Circumſtances; and what Food every Parent ſhall give his Children, with the Meaſure, Time, *&c.* and ſo of the reſt; This is to go beyond his Calling, and ſo beyond his true Authority, and ſuch Laws oblige not.

So if a King will give ſuch Laws to Chriſt's *true Miniſters*, as turn them *out of their Callings*, and take them *all upon himſelf*; it is an acting beyond, and without Authority, and doth not oblige. It is the Office of a *Paſtor* of the Church, to *have* and *uſe* the *Keys of the Church*, to be the *immediate Miniſterial Judge of Individuals, who is to be taken in by Baptiſme, and entertained in holy Communion, and in Sin called to Repentance; and for Impenitency ſhut out by Excommunication; and upon Repentance reſtored by Abſolution.* For the *right performance* of all theſe the King may give *general regulating Laws*, ſubſervient to *Chriſt's Laws*, to ſecure and promote *their* execution; and he may forbid and puniſh groſs abuſes of the Miniſtry, as well as of Phyſicians, and other Callings. But if he will uſurp the *Miniſtry* in the Parts aforeſaid, or take thoſe Parts out of the Miniſters hand, and as *Uzziah* burn Incenſe: If he will chuſe for the Miniſter what *Text ſtill to Preach on*, and what *Words in Preaching and Prayer ſtill to ſay*; and bid him *inſtruct, reprove, comfort, direct, baptiſe, abſolve no man but ſuch as are named to him by the King*, nor in *any words* but ſuch as he *preſcribeth*; this being, 1. A *deſtroying of an Office of Chriſt's Inſtitution.* 2. And an *uſurping of it* without Chriſt's conſent; ſuch Laws oblige not, but are null as to Conſcience, for want of *true Authority* in the Makers:

Makers: As the Sentence of a Judge *in foro alieno*, or in a Circuit, City, or Corporation, where the Power is appropriated to others.

2. And if a Prince, or Inferiour Ruler, who hath power to *determine Circumſtantials* about the Callings of his Subjects, ſhall *ſo determine* them as ſhall *overthrow the very End and work it ſelf*, in a Calling *which God by Nature, or Scripture, hath made neceſſary*; this Determination bindeth not, it being an Act without Authority: For it is as true of Magiſtracy, as of *Paul*'s Apoſtleſhip, *We have this power for edification, and not for deſtruction*, 2 *Cor.* 10. 8. & 13. 10. *Eph.* 4. 12. 2. *Cor.* 12. 19. 1 *Cor.* 14. 5. 12. 26.

It is the pernicious errour of ſome Papiſts, to Dream that their Pope and Church hath a Power of obligatory judging in matters of *Faith and Practice, in partem utramlibet*; and in this wicked ſuppoſition they Cant over and over to the ignorant, *who ſhall be Judge*. To which we ſay, That *Publick Judgment* belongeth *to Publick Perſons*; that is, To the *Magiſtrate* [*who ſhall have Civil Communion*] (even on Religious accounts,) and to the *Paſtors* [*who ſhall have Church-Communion*;] and *private Judgment* (diſcerning each Mans Duty) belongs to *every rational man*. But *all men* are Subjects of God, and their *judging Power* is *limited* by his Laws.

If the Queſtion be, *Whether there be a God, a Chriſt, a Scripture, a Heaven, an Immortality of Souls, &c.* Kings, and Paſtors, and Councils may, and muſt judge that *there is*; but none of them may judge that *there is not*; if they do, it's *worſe* than *null*: And in *Practicals*, if the Queſtion be, *Whether we may, or muſt pray for the hallowing of God's Name, the coming of his Kingdom, the doing of his Will on Earth as it is done in Heaven*; or whether

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we muſt *love* and *worſhip God*, and *hear* him, and *meditate on his Word*; and whether true Miniſters of Chriſt *may, or muſt Preach in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon*; and ſeek to *inſtruct and ſave Mens Souls*; whether we muſt honour our Parents, relieve the Poor, and ſave Mens lives, in danger, from Murderers, *&c.* They have Authority to judge *affirmatively*, but none at all to judge *negatively*; which if they do, it's worſe than *null.*

So Kings and Paſtors have power to judge that we *may not take God's Name in vain, nor be perjured, nor prophane his ſeparated day, nor forſake the aſſembling of our ſelves for his Publick Worſhip, nor Murder, nor commit Adultery, nor ſteal, nor lye, or bear falſe witneſs, nor perſecute, nor hurt any man injuriouſly*; but they have no power to judge that we *may do any one* of theſe: and if they ſo judge, or command, it is a *nullity* to the *Subject, and worſe to themſelves.* God hath made no men *abſolute Judges*, but given them a *Regulating and Limiting Law to Judge by.*

Even ſo thoſe Rulers who have Power to Judge and Command ſome *Circumſtances of Divine Worſhip*, they have it but as a *means of promoting that Worſhip, and its Ends*, by the means of *Edifying-Order*; and they have no Power to *deſtroy the Worſhip, or its Ends.* For Inſtance, whoever hath Power to determine of the *Place of Publick Worſhip*, hath that Power for the *Worſhip, and Worſhippers* ſake; and is to be obeyed when he doth it accordingly. But if he Command a thouſand Perſons to meet no where but in a Room that will not hold two hundred, or three hundred; or fifty thouſand Perſons to meet no where but in one Temple, where above three thouſand cannot hear; this is, on pretenſe of *ordering* and *placing* God's Worſhip, to *forbid it to all the reſt*; for which

which God never gave him Power: So alſo it is, if he command them to meet no where but forty, or thirty, or twenty miles off from their Habitation, or where they cannot go without deſtroying the *work* and *End*.

So whoever hath Power to chuſe the *Day*, or the *Hours* of God's Publick Worſhip, hath this Power for the *work ſake*, and the *Peoples edification*; and is to be obeyed when his Commands are anſwerable. But if he ſhould Command Men to worſhip God only *once a Year*, or *once a Month*; or to do it only at *Mid-night*, and ſo *deſtroy the Work* by *ill-timing* it; this is a *nullity*, as being an Act without Authority, and worſe, as againſt the Laws of God.

So whoever it be that hath Power to appoint *Paſtors and Teachers* to the Churches or Publick Aſſemblies, if they ſhould, as *Conſtantius* and *Valens*, ſend *Arrians* to be Biſhops, or any other intollerable Perſons, who through utter *inſufficiency*, *Hereſie*, or *Malignity* are uncapable, and will do more hurt than good; or if they would limit the Churches, or Countries, to an utterly incompetent *Number*, and ſay, *No other ſhall Preach, but ſuch uncapable Perſons*; or *no more than one to fifty thouſand Souls*, or where *ten or twenty are neceſſary*; this is to *forbid Preaching*, or *corrupt it*, and *deſtroy* Mens *Souls* on pretenſe of Order: And it is a nullity, and worſe.

So if the ſame Rulers ſhould ſay, that, *You ſhall Preach only in Country Villages*, but not within *many miles of Cities, or Corporations*, which *truly* and *notoriouſly want your Preaching*; this were but to *forbid ſuch Cities, and Corporations, to hear the neceſſary Preaching of the Goſpel*, and the Miniſters to Preach it; and is a nullity and worſe, as being both without any Authority from God, and againſt his Laws.

3. But if *true Rightful Governours*, who have *Power to determine Circumſtantials, Civil, or Religious*, ſhall *miſ-determine them*; yet ſo as *not to deſtroy the Work*, or *End*, nor put Subjects on the breaking of any Law of God; here their fault will not diſoblige us from the Duty of obeying. Though it be a ſinful miſtake of theirs, we may be yet obliged to do what they Command us. For Inſtance,

The Ruler chuſeth a *Place leſs convenient*, that hath *no Seats*, or an *ill acceſs*, yet capable of the Aſſembly; He chuſeth a *leſs convenient Hour* of the Day; he placeth the *Pulpit* in a *leſs convenient Place*; he appointeth *a tollerable*, but not the *beſt Tranſlation of the Scripture, and Metre* of the *Pſalms*, or *Tunes*, to be uſed; he appointeth a *Bible* of a *worſer Print*; and (ſuppoſing him Authorized to chuſe the Preacher) he appointeth not the *beſt*, or *fitteſt Preacher* which might be had: And whether it be the *preſent Paſtor*, or any other (we now diſpute not that) who hath Authority to chuſe *Chapters, and Texts, and word the Sermons and Prayers*, if he chuſe a *leſs convenient Chapter, Text, or Subject, and leſs convenient Method and Words in Preaching and Prayer*; all this is his *Infirmity and Fault*, but yet the People muſt not refuſe the thing ſo commanded: Not that we muſt obey it *ſub ratione mali, as ill choſen and inconvenient*, but [*Though it be ſuch*;] not *qua* but *quod inconveniens*.

And the Reaſons are, 1. An *inconvenient ill-choſen Place, Time, Text, Tranſlation, Metre, Tune, &c.* may be good as a *means of Union and Concord in the Worſhip*, which without that would not be had; and that *Union* and *Concord* is a Duty: Therefore ſo is the *neceſſary means*, though it be not *the beſt* that could be choſen.

If

If the People will not join with that *Tranſlation*, *Metre*, *Tune*, *Subject*, *Place*, *Time*, which the Miniſter uſeth, or chuſeth, they cannot join with him in the *worſhip*. Were there no Interpoſition of Authority, but mens *conſent*, if a *thouſand* of the People are for a *leſs convenient means*, (*Time*, *Place*, *&c.*) and a *ſmall part* for a *more convenient*, they cannot concur but in ſome agreement: And if the miſtaken part will not yield to the other, when *Unity is neceſſary*, for that *Unity ſake* the reſt muſt yield to them.

2. The *leſs convenient* way may *accidentally* become a means to *avoid Perſecution*, and the *loſs of all their Liberty and Publick Advantages*; and they that *refuſe that* may be deprived of *all the reſt*. And it's better worſhip God, *e. g.* at an *inconvenient Time*, *Place*, *&c.* than *not at all*.

3. The *General Obligation to obey our Governours*, is not nullified by every miſtake in the Law or Determination: For all Mankind being imperfect, it is ſuppoſed that all Government by Man is imperfect: If we ſhould forbear *praying* till we can pray without all ſin, we ſhould never pray; and if we ſhould forbear *obeying* till Rulers Commands be *perfect*, or *blameleſs*, we ſhould *never obey*: There is *ſome fault in every Tranſlation of the Bible*, *every Verſion of the Pſalms*, *every Sermon and Prayer*, that we hear, or make; and in every *Book* that we *Write*, and *Read*. If no Parent, Teacher, Maſter, Prince, oblige us, but only by ſuch Laws and Mandates as have *no fault*, all Government and Obedience is null, or at an End.

Obj. *No Man is bound to that which is evil.*

Anſw. 1. It may be *evil* in the *Commander*, and *good* in the *Obeyer*: Not that the *ſame thing is good to one*, *and*

ill to the other (though in other Inſtances that often fall out;) for it is *not the ſame thing*: To *Command* an *Inconveient Time, Place, Tranſlation, Tune, &c.* is *one Action*, and to *obey that Command* is *another.*

2. We obey it not as *evil*, but as *good*: The *inconvenient Time, Place, &c.* is *not good* as *inconvenient*, but as a *means of Order and Concord*, and ſo we uſe it. And the *General Nature of Obedience* is good; and if we muſt do *no good*, which we cannot do without *ſome adherent evil*, we muſt *never Pray, Preach, Eat, Drink, or Trade more.*

Pr. 5. *If a Ruler go beyond (and ſo without) his Authority, yet in ſeveral Caſes we may be bound to do what he Commandeth, as ſuch.*

For Inſtance, In caſe the thing be in it ſelf *good*, or at leaſt *indifferent and Lawful*; and the *Honour* of the *Ruler*, or the *Peace* of the Society dependeth on our *material* obeying him: It is our Duty to *honour the King*, and our *Parents* and *Paſtors*, and to avoid all things that will *diſhonour* them; or that will encourage others in diſobedience, or diſorder the Society. If therefore it were granted to be the *Paſtors Duty*, and not *the Kings*, *to word our Prayers and Sermons, and chuſe Tranſlations, Chapters, Metres, Tunes, &c.* yet if the *King do it*, though *beyond his Calling*; that is, *If he appoint us what Chapter to read every day in Publick, and Command ſome Prayers to be read, and ſome Homilies, or Printed Sermons to be ſometime read*, which are *all good and lawful in themſelves*, not deſtroying the *Office of the Miniſtry*; and if by him, or the People, it be taken for *Contempt*, and a *diſhonouring him*, to diſobey him, the *General Command of honouring the King*, will here oblige us to the Commanded Action.

And

And if the Queſtion be, Whether this be *formal Obedience*, or only *material*? We Anſwer, 1. It is but *material* and not *formal Obedience*, *de ſpecie*, properly as it is to a Command that is *without Authority to that thing*. But, 2. It partaketh of *formal Obedience* as to the *Genu*, in as much as we do it for the *honour of a Ruler*, and becauſe it is his Command who hath Authority to *Govern us*, though not to do it *by this miſtaken Action*.

Pr. 6. *If a Rightful Ruler ſhould go quite beyond the bounds of his Authority, ſo far as that his Command did not at all bind us, yet would it not make an indifferent thing become unlawful, meerly becauſe he doth Command it*; what ever any other Accident may do.

Proved, 1. Becauſe there is no force in the Inference, [*It is Commanded*, ergo, *it is unlawful*.]

2. Though his Act be culpable and without true power, yet he is *no Uſurper whom we are obliged to diſown*; and all true Governours have their faults.

3. The thing may be *good*, and ſo a *Duty* on other accidental reaſons, *viz.* 1. As a means of Concord: 2. Of pleaſing others to their edification: 3. Of honouring Superiours: 4. Of obtaining liberty, and avoiding miſchief; and as *ſuch*, though not as an Act of *Obedience*, may be a *Duty*.

4. Elſe it would be in the power of ill-minded Rulers, to make all indifferent lawful things to be ſin or unlawful to us, by Commanding them; and ſo to deprive us craftily of all our liberty, and make us Slaves. If Rulers *forbidding* them, make not all things indifferent ſinful (which many ſay) much leſs their *commanding* them; elſe they might command inſtead of forbidding, and do the ſame thing.

We do believe that there may be found ſome Perſons in the

the world of ſuch *weak Underſtandings*, and *unruly Spirits*, as to think that it *is a ſinful betraying of their Liberty, to do a thing antecedently indifferent, when it is commanded them.* Were we acquainted with ſuch a one, we might ask him, 1. At *what Age* he would have Mankind begin the practice of this Principle? Infants cannot learn it. If before they can feed themſelves, they ſhould refuſe Meat at the Hour when it is offered them by the Mother, becauſe that Hour was antecedently indifferent; yea, if Children or Servants refuſe their ſet Meals on that account, it were juſt if hunger teach them more wit and obedience. If Children will think they *betray their Liberties*, if they learn that *Catechiſm*, or *words of Prayer* which the Parents teach them, (even *ſet Forms*,) or if they will not read, hear, or learn, or pray at *the Hour* appointed by their Parents, becauſe it was *antecedently indifferent*; or if they will not go to the Church at the *Hour* ſet them by the Miniſter, becauſe it was before a time indifferent, how ſhould they be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?

2. We would ask ſuch a one, Whether this be an obeying of that Command, *Col.* 3. 20. 22. [*Children obey your Parents in all things, for this is well-pleaſing to the Lord: Servants obey in all things your Maſters according to the Fleſh*? Are *things lawful* none of the [*All things*?]

3. If Obedience muſt be only to things *antecedently neceſſary*, may not the Child in ſuch expect Obedience from the Father, in ſome ſort, as well as the Father from the Child? We mean *material* Obedience, that the thing be done.

4. We hope they will not ſay the ſame to *God*, that they will obey him in nothing antecedently indifferent:

And

And that is, becauſe the very *nature* of *obedience* is contrary. And if ſo, is it no ſubordinate *obedience* that is due to Parents and other Superiors? *Government*, *as ſuch*, can make that a Duty which *antecedently was none*, (or elſe all Children and Servants live in conſtant ſin:) Therefore *Obedience*, *as ſuch*, conſiſteth in obeying ſuch Government. For though the chief work of all *Rulers*, is to urge the obſervation of *Gods own Laws*, yet their *ſecondary* work is (as Corporations have *By-Laws* about *Particulars*, under the Univerſal Laws of the Kingdom, ſo) to determine of *ſubſervient Particulars*. And if their Principle practiſed in *Families* and *Schools*, would overthrow all Family and School Order and Obedience, and utterly ſubvert the Education of Mankind; let them conſider why it ſhould be brought into Kingdoms, Cities, or Churches.

5. And we would ask them, Whether they live not themſelves in the practice of the contrary? Do not all Sects, even Quakers, meet at the *Place* and *Time* which their Leaders do appoint them? Do they not hear the *words* which the Leader chuſeth for their Ears? Do they not command their own *Servants* and *Children things* or *circumſtances* antecedently indifferent?

Did we hold ſuch Principles, we ſhould have leſs reaſon to lament the ſin of thoſe who have of late written Accuſations againſt us, as Subverters of Government, Order, and Obedience: And if any one can find any word of ſuch importance, in any *one* called a *meer Nonconformiſt* (which we know not of,) we have no more to do with it, than the Church of *England* hath with words of *Untruth*, *Calumny*, *Errour*, or *Non-ſenſe*, which we read in the *Books*, or hear in the *words* of any *Conformiſts*:

(of

(of which we are not willing to imitate ſuch as gather Catalogues or Dunghills of them:) And the rather becauſe, 1. We *Licenſed* not ſuch *Books*: 2. Nor *Ordained* ſuch to the ſacred Miniſtry: 3. Nor have the *Government* of them; and therefore are not reſponſible for them.

As for thoſe men that have perſwaded the ignorant in Print, that we hold the *things, to which we deny Conformity, to be Indifferent or Lawful*, and avoid them only as *Inconvenient* or *Offenſive* to the *Weak*; and that ſome of us were forced at the *Savoy* to aſſert, that, *Nothing may be commanded by Authority which may by accident become Unlawful to the Subject*, (or become his ſin by abuſe,) it is a ſubject of which we ſhall here ſay no more, but that, we will not here do ſo great a diſhonour to the Authors, as ſome of them have done to themſelves, that is, to tell the world their Names; the reſt that concealed them, had more tenderneſs it ſeems of their Reputation than of their Conſciences: What ſort of Men believe them, it is eaſie to conjecture: It is no fault of the Earth to bear them, nor of the Sun to ſhine upon the Writers or the Believers; and we hope it is none in us to hear and bear the Calumny, nor (in our circumſtances) that we have not farther provoked them, by anſwering for our ſelves. We muſt lament the temptations and dangers of the Age, and the ſinful alienation of Minds, Diviſions and Diſtractions, which Incendiaries have cauſed, and ſtill cauſe. But for our ſelves, we do with peace read and remember, *Luke* 8. 17. *Nothing is ſecret that ſhall not be made manifeſt, neither any thing hid, that ſhall not be known and come abroad.* Jam. 5. 7, 8. *Be patient, Brethren, to the coming of the Lord---- ſtabliſh your hearts, for*

for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Matth. 5. 11, 12. *Bleſſed are ye when men ſhall revile you and perſecute you, and ſhall ſay all manner of evil againſt you falſly for my ſake: Rejoice and be exceeding glad, &c.* Pſal. 37. 13. *The Lord ſhall laugh at him; for he ſeeth that his day is coming.* Pſal. 146. 4. *His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his Earth: in that very day his thoughts periſh.* Luke 23. 34. *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

FINIS.

F. THE

L' ABE

THE JUDGMENT OF *NON-CONFORMISTS* OF THINGS SINFUL by ACCIDENT, AND OF SCANDAL.

PUBLISHED

To ſave Mens Souls from the Guilt of Believing thoſe Men who tell them, that the Non-Conformiſts Aſſerted, that, [*Whatever may be the occaſion of Sin to any muſt be taken away*; or that, *Nothing may be impoſed which Men may take Scandal at, or by Accident turn to Sin.*]

And to help thoſe to Repentance, who have polluted their Souls with Falſhood and Uncharitableneſs by Believing them, and ſeconding their Reports.

Printed in the Year, 1676.

THE JUDGMENT OF *NON-CONFORMISTS* OF Things Sinful by Accident, and of Scandal.

COuld we but have prevailed with Men of *confused Conceptions*, and *confounding Practices*, to have been reconciled to *Distinctneſs* and *Congruity* of ſpeech; or at leaſt, with Men of *haſte, temerity, and paſſion*, to have *endured* it, and patiently heard us diſtinctly tell them *what we hold*, we might have ſpared this trouble to the Reader and our ſelves.

Thoſe that cannot bear *diſtinct explication*, but in the Dungeon of *Confuſion* ſtill deride or rage at the Light, which rendering things *intelligible*, doth open the unlovelineſs of *Ignorance*, and the *errour and ſin* which are its Progeny, are not the Readers for whom this is publiſhed; but ſuch as have retained ſo much of *Humane*

mane Nature, as to *love the Light*, and be *willing* to know the truth, and to be patient of a little ſober *conſideration* that they may know it.

That we may make the matter in queſtion Intelligible, we muſt open the *Nature of Morality*, and ſo of *Moral Evil* (or *Sin*,) and what it is to be *Evil by Accident*; and *what Accidents* make a thing unlawful to be commanded, and what not; and *what Scandal is*, *and how far to be avoided*; which we ſhall do in theſe Propoſitions following.

Prop. 1. MORALITY is either *Regulans*, or *Regulata*, (*menſurans*, or *menſurata*:) The firſt is Radically in God's own Mind and Will, and is called by many *Lex æterna*; and it is *ſignally*, and *expreſſively* in Gods Laws; and *ſubordinately* in *Man's Laws*, as they are a Rule to Subjects: Of theſe we are not now to ſpeak; that is, not of the *holineſs of God* or *his Laws*, nor of *Man's*, as they are *truly a Rule* to Subjects.

Morality as Regulated is ſubjected in the *Minds and Actions* of the Creature; ſpecially in the WILL, and in our Actions, as VOLUNTARY; and ſo even the *Laws of Men*, as thoſe Men are *God's Subjects*, and *their Laws* are *Actions* good or evil, as *Regulated* by God's Superiour Laws, are the Subjects of the *Morality* now in queſtion.

Prop. 2. This *Morality* in Man's *Will and Actions* is nothing elſe, *formally*, but their *Relation* of *Conformity* or *Diſconformity* to God's Law, as their Rule; (and ſubordinately to ſubordinate Rules;) and *materially* to the *End* and *Objects*.

Prop. 3. How far this *Moral Relation* is immediately founded in a *Phyſical Relation*, which is before it in order of Nature, *viz.* in the ſaid Relation of the *will* and *Acti-*

on

on to the *End and Object* as ſuch, antecedently to the Relation to the *commanding* or *forbidding* Law, we would willingly open, were it not left we ſeem, with Men that love not much diſtinction, to juſtifie or excuſe them that cenſure us as guilty of exceſs herein; and we may do what is now neceſſary to be done without it.

Prop. 4. No *Being* as *ſuch*, no *Subſtance* as *ſuch*, no *Habit* as a *Habit*, no *Act* as an *Act*, is *Morally Good or Evil*: For ſo they are but *Quid Naturale*; and God doth not command and forbid *Natural Beings as ſuch.*

Prop. 5. All *Moral Good and Evil* is ſubjected in *Natural Beings*, or *Privations*, but not *immediately* as ſuch; but as *modified*, *circumſtantiated*, and *related.*

Prop. 6. *Good* and *Evil* make up *all Morality*; there is no *third Species*: There are many things that are *Indifferent* as to *Morality*; that is, neither *Morally Good*, nor *Morally Evil*; but there is nothing *Moral-Indifferent*: Meer Natural *Beings* and *Acts* are *Indifferent* as to *Morality*; that is, they are *not Moral*: But *whatever is Moral*, is *Morally Good or Evil*, and not Indifferent.

Prop. 7. The Subject and *quid abſolutum Fundamentale*, of all *moral good*, *is*, *quid poſitivum*, or a real Being; but the *Form of moral evil* is ever found indeed in a real Subject, but not always in a *real fundamentum.* For it is (oft at leaſt) in *total Omiſſions* and *Privations* of the Act, and in Privations of ſome modal or accidental qualification, or rectitude.

Prop. 8. Yet the *formal relations of moral good and evil*, are both *true Relations*; even *Diſ-conformity* as well as *Conformity*, (*as curvitude* and diſ-ſimilitude are, as well as *rectitude* and *ſimilitude*:) And a Meer *Negative* is neither *good nor evil*, *e.g. Negative Non-conformity*, which is not *Privative Diſ-conformity*, is no ſin; becauſe there being

ing not the *Debitum ineſſendi*, the *non-ineſſe* is inculpable. It ſeemeth indeed to ſome Learned Men, that *non agere* may be *moral good*; e.g. *Non odiſſe Deum, aut proximum, non mentiri*, not to *murder*, *ſteal*, *&c.* And it's true, that the *non agere* is the thing remotely commanded, or, *loco materie remotioris*; but the thing *immediately commanded*, is the *Nolle agere*: The *Will* by all theſe Commands is bound *poſitively to nill* the forbidden Act, *e.g.* Murder, Adultery, Lying, *&c.* To *nill* them is the *prime Duty* or *moral Good* (that we ſay not with *Ockam*, *the only*) and *not-to-do-them* is the ſecondary, but that is as they are Acts *reſtrained*, or forborn, by a *Commanding Will*: For a Man in Infancy, or the Womb, or in an Apoplexie, or when he is wholly taken up with ſome other ſin, not then to Steal, Lye, Murder, or commit Adultery, is not at all a *moral Good*. But a meer incogitancy, *non agere*, *non velle*, may be a true *moral Evil*: The reaſon is, becauſe when a *right Volition* is commanded, (as to love God or Man,) or *a right Action*, (to do good,) not to do it is a breach of the Command: And *not to will* and *not to do* when we *ought* is the commoneſt kind of ſinning.

Prop. 9. Right ordered *Actions*, *Diſpoſitions*, *and Habits* then as *in*, or *of the Will*, directly, and remotely ſome *non agency*, are the only things commanded, called *morally Good*; (ſave that *eorum gratia* the *Soul* and *whole man* (or perſon) is well and truly called *morally Good*:) And the *Privation* and *Inordination* of *Voluntary Actions*, *Diſpoſitions*, *and Habits*, are the only *moral Evil*; (ſave that the perſon is alſo called ſuch *eorum gratia*.)

Prop. 10. An Action may be Indifferent, or of no Morality, as to *Election*, *or Performance*; and yet to *Deliberate* about that Act may be *morally good*. *e. g.* I may doubt

doubt of two ways which are equal to my End (as far as can be known by me,) whether they be ſo or not; or which is the better: I may be obliged to deliberate whether they are equal or not, to guide my Progreſs, and end my Doubt: And when I have found them equal, I have found that Comparatively neither of them is matter of *Election*, as by reaſon to be preferred to the other: But yet becauſe I muſt *chuſe to go on*, therefore I muſt *take* one way and not the other, becauſe I cannot go both: But this is only a chuſing to *go*, and a *taking that way*, but not a *chuſing it*, which ſignifieth a rational preferring it. Here my Deliberation is a *moral Act*, and ſo is my *chuſing to go*; but my *chuſing this way*, rather than the other, is none: For upon deliberating I found that neither was Eligible, and Choice no Duty.

Prop. 11. As the ſmallneſs of the leaſt *Phyſical* Being, though undiſcernable, proveth it not to be *Nothing*; ſo the ſmallneſs of any *moral* Good or Evil, (Duty or Sin) proveth not that it is no *Duty*, or *Sin* at all.

Prop. 12. Moral Good and Evil is it ſelf only an *Accident*; for *Habits*, *Diſpoſitions*, *Actions*, and *Relations*, are Accidents; and *Privations* are either reductively Accidents (as ſome call them) or leſs than Accidents, even meer *nothings*, (though from a *Nullity* or *Privation* a *moral Relation* truly reſult on the *Perſon*.)

Prop. 13. Therefore when we ſay that a thing is *Good or Evil by Accident*, we mean ſomewhat more than that the Good or Evil is an *Accident* it ſelf, (for there is no other:) We mean that it is ſomething acciding (or added) to the *former Accident* or *State* that maketh it now Good or Evil.

Prop. 14. In an *Action* there is conſiderable, 1. The *Action* as ſuch, or as ſpecified only by the *Faculty*, (*Intelle-*

 ction,

ction, Volition, Imagination &c.) 2. The Action as farther ſpecified by the *terminating Object*; 1. In the firſt reſpect, the *Gradus Actus* is *Accidens accidentis*: And an Act may become Good or Evil, by ſuch *Intenſeneſs* or *Remiſſneſs* as is ordinate or inordinate. And the Timing it may do the like: (As to be *Thinking* when I ſhould ſleep.) 2. In the ſecond reſpect, an *Accident ſupervening* or *added to the Object*, is ſaid to make that Action *Good or Evil* by *Accident*; that is, by an alteration of the ſpecifying Object by ſome *Accident*. And this is the commoneſt Caſe, and the Senſe in which this Controverſie in hand is moſt concerned; which therefore we deſire to be moſt obſerved.

Prop. 15. Any Man therefore that knoweth what true Knowledge is, may eaſily perceive that he that will Diſpute about *Bonum vel Malum per ſe & per accidens*, if he would not loſe *his labour*, or deceive, muſt uſe more diligence in explaining theſe Terms, than they do that toſs them about unexplained, as if they were ſufficiently intelligible of themſelves, to ſuch as ſome uſe to make the Receivers of their cholerick and ſplenetick evacuations. Even *Bonum & Malum per ſe*, is not ſuch *per ſe qua ſubſtantiam*, nor *per ſe qua Actum*, nor *per ſe qua Intellectionem, Volitionem aut Praxin executivam*; but *per ſe ut Accidens ſubſtantiæ* (*ſcilicet Actum*) *circa Objectum* (*quod eſt accidens plerumq;*) *ſine altero accidente ſuperaddito*. So that the ſame which now is *Bonum vel Malum per accidens*, is called *Bonum vel malum per ſe*, in reſpect to a ſupervenient Accident: And excluding *all Accidents*, or all *Good* or *Evil by Accident*; ſo nothing in the World is *Bonum* or *Malum morale per ſe* (except what is anon excepted. *E.G.* To *Love* is *an Act*; that *Act* (as is the *Habit* alſo) is an *Accident*: To *love* a Man as godly

godly or wiſe, or as my King or Teacher, is to love him for Accidents; that is, Godlineſs, *wiſdom*, Authority, *&c.* This is *Bonum per accidens*, and yet *Bonum per ſe*, ſtating the Object thus, without farther Accidents. To love him as an Enemy, and Perſecutor, and Silencer of Godly Miniſters of Chriſt, is *Malum per Accidens*, and yet *Malum per ſe*, in reſpect to farther Accidents. To love the *Man* is not Evil, but to love him *for his Evil*. The Exception here is, when we are bound to love the *ſimple Eſſence*, as ſuch, abſtracting from all Accidents: The principal Inſtance is of our *love to God*, (of which more anon;) becauſe God hath no Accidents, and therefore is loved meerly as in his Eſſence: And no doubt but God is to be loved as in his Eſſential perfection. But yet we are none of thoſe that againſt *Pet. Hurtado Mendoz*, and other Nominals, will undertake to prove, that Relations to the Creatures (which are Accidents) do not truly belong to God; ſuch as that of *Creator*, *Owner*, *Ruler*, *Benefactor*, *&c.* we leave that Task to the Thomiſts; and to other Mens judgements how well they perform it.

The next Inſtance is (*our love to Man as Man*,) and ſo to other Created Eſſences; which we deny not, but add, 1. That Man's Relation to God, as he ſheweth his Maker's perfections is a Relation, and that's it that is to be loved morally in Man, at leaſt principally, and never left out: The ſame we ſay of other Eſſences. 2. And the *wiſdom*, *Goodneſs*, and ſo the *moral amiableneſs* of Man (at leaſt the principal) is it ſelf an Accident. The Word of God, and the Worſhip of God, are Accidents. But yet we ſay, that the propereſt Notion of *Bonum per ſe*, is, when we love a thing (but ſpecially God himſelf) as in the ſimple Eſſence, without a ſupervening obliging Accident: And of *malum per ſe*, when God's very *Eſ-*

ſence is hated, or not loved: But that any morally hate the very ſubſtantial Eſſence of a Creature, we leave others to prove.

Prop. 16. This holdeth about the very Negative Laws of the Decalogue, *e.g.* To kill a Man is in it ſelf no *moral Evil*; elſe it were ſin to Execute Malefactors; and Kings, Judges, and Souldiers were the moſt criminal ſinners: To kill a Man Authoritatively, that is, a Traytor, or Murderer, is good; that is, an Act with its due Mode and Object, which are Accidents that make it good. And to kill the Innocent, or without Authority, is ſin by this Accident, of an undue Mode and Object.

To take another Mans Goods or Money is not *Malum per ſe*; for it may be done as a Mulct, or by Law on juſt Cauſe, or for the Publick defence by Authority, or by his Conſent: But to take it without Conſent, Right, or Authority, is ſin by this Accident. So alſo of the ſeventh Commandment. The Law forbids the Act as Clothed with its undue Accidents. The Names of Injuſtice, Coveting, Murder, Adultery, Theft, Falſe-witneſs, *&c.* all ſignifie the Acts with the undue prohibited Accidents. One of our Caſuiſts excepteth only *Lying*, as ſimply *per ſe* Evil: But he that Lyeth, ſinneth not becauſe he ſpeaketh *thoſe ſame words*, but becauſe he ſpeaketh words that, in *relation* to his own mind, and to the *matter*, and to the hearers underſtanding, are *falſe* and *deceitful:* And that Relative Incongruity of the words is the accident that maketh them ſinful.

Prop. 17. Man paſſeth his life among ſuch a multitude of accidents and circumſtances, that it is not *one*, but *very many*, that every one of our actions is Clothed with, or concerned in, which tend to make it Good or Evil.

Prop. 18. A

Prop. 18. A chief distinction here to be observed, is between *Immutable Duties*, (supposing our own continued Faculties) and mutable ones; and those things are principally or eminently called *Good or Evil per se*, which are so *immutably*, and no supervenient accident can ever make them otherwise: And in the most notable Sense those things are called *Good or Evil per accidens*, which by *supervening accidents* may be changed from what they were before.

Pr. 19. That which is thus *immutably Good per se*, is Mans Duty to *God himself immediately*, as he is our *Owner*, *Ruler*, *Benefactor*, *and End*: Considering this Duty not in *this* or that *time*, but *in kind*, *in its season*; and supposing our *Faculties and Con-causes*. For if a Man should be exercising even Love to God when he is bound to sleep for the support of Nature, or if a Man should love God with so passionate an affection as would distract him, this, as so used, is not good; but we never knew any in much danger of so over-doing: Nor is it a Duty for a Man in Infancy, or an Apoplexy, or deep sleep, *&c.* actually to love, fear, or trust God; and in other such Cases of Impossibility. But when *possible*, or in its *season*, it is *immutably* a Duty: Not so *rarely* as the Jansenist chargeth the Jesuite Casuists to hold, once in many Weeks, or Months, or Years; but Love constraining us to its holy Fruits, must be the very *New Nature* as it were of our Souls, and the Business of our Lives.

Prop. 20. That which makes this to be *Bonum per se immutabile*, which no accident can alter, is, 1. Because the *Foundations* of our Obligations are Immutable, while our Faculties and Powers endure (else they would cease,) for the *debitum* is a Relation resulting from the meer Being or Position of the Humane Nature, as related to God:

And

And God will never change: Therefore unleſs Man ceaſe to be man, or to be able to act as man, the obligation can by no accident be changed. 2. Becauſe it is a duty to the ſupreme Ruler and abſolute infinite Good; and therefore the very performance of it is excluſive of all changing accidents: For he that loveth God as a means to his fleſhly pleaſure and proſperity only, and as leſs good to him than the world, loveth him not as God: And he that loveth him as God, loveth him as the abſolute Power, Wiſdom, and Goodneſs, and therefore excluſively as to all Competitors, unleſs as this love is *ſinfully defective*; but that accident of defectiveneſs maketh not our love to God to be a ſin, but the *defect* of it as to *degree* or *frequency* of exerciſe is the ſin. 3. And alſo becauſe that God is the *Final Object*, and *Love* the *Final Act*; which together make up the ultimate end of man (including the *Viſion* that kindleth love, and the *praiſe joy*, and *obedience* which expreſs it:) But though means may be oft changed, and may be *too much* loved, yet the ultimate end is unchangeable, and cannot be too much loved (by true mental love, diſtinct from diſtracting paſſions;) therefore our Obligations to it are according. So that Love to God is the moſt immutable Moral Good.

And the ſame in their *place* and *time* muſt be ſaid of holy *Fear*, *Truſt*, and *Obedience* to God, from which no Accident can diſoblige us; no Command or Prohibition of man; no ſuffering of body, or danger of life it ſelf; much leſs the allurements of ſenſual delights.

Pr. 21. Accordingly to *hate God*, to diſtruſt his known Promiſe, to diſobey his known Law, to oppoſe or perſecute his known Intereſt in the world, in his *word* and *worſhip*, *Church* and *Servants*, are *immutably evil per ſe*; which no Accident can make good or lawful: For the Reaſons before given.

22. But

Pr. 22. But where the *object* is mutable, and the circumſtances of things which the Obligation preſuppoſeth, there the *duty* or *ſinfulneſs* is by ſupervening Accidents mutable: Even Inceſt, which is a hainous ſin, was a duty to *Adams* Children, becauſe of accidental difference of the caſe. The killing of an innocent Son, was well conſented to by *Abraham*, when the Lord of Life and of all the world had commanded it; and that conſent was an act of eminent goodneſs, and accordingly rewarded. The borrowing of the *Egyptians* Goods without intent to reſtore them, and the robbing of them by taking them away, was well done, when the abſolute Owner of the World had by his Precept altered the Propriety. Thus the altering of the Caſe may alter Obligations.

Pr. 23. But beſides the *immutable* Obligations to *God himſelf*, there are many inſtances of our actions towards *men*, and *worldly Things*, which are *ordinarily unchanged*; and only ſome rare or ſupernatural declaration of the will of God doth change them: For as God the Author and Orderer of Nature, ſheweth us by experience, that he delighteth much in the *ordinary Conſtancy* of his *operations*, and *rarely changeth* the *courſe of Nature*; ſo there is an anſwerable conſtancy in the *ordinary ſtate and order* of *Things*; and conſequently of *obligations* or *duty*. And theſe are the matter of Gods *common univerſal Laws*, which ordinarily oblige all mankind; Theſe are the matter of the ſecond Table of the Decalogue; and are ſeconds in point of *immutable Obligation* to the firſt (mentioned) ſort (our natural duty to God:) For though man be mutable, and God immutable, yet God preſerveth ſo much conſtancy in Humane Affairs, as is juſt matter of conſtant univerſal Laws, (though they are lyable rarely to diſpenſations or exceptions.) And as not murdering, not committing Adultery, not ſtealing, not lying, or falſe witneſs bearing,

ing are ſuch, ſo alſo are the *meer Poſitives* of the firſt Table, ſuch as are the acts of *Inſtituted Worſhip*, and the holy obſervation of the Lords day.

Prop. 24. The Caſes of Mans Life, which are more *mutable*, are the matter of mutable *Duty* and *Sin*, which are moſt uſually called *Good or Evil per accidens*, becauſe *that mutable accidents*, added to the more conſtant accidents, make them ſuch by change. And ſo it is greatly to be noted, that the Act which is a Duty to one Man, in one Place, at one Time, *&c.* may be a ſin to another Man, or at another Time, Place, *&c.* And that new accidents may again come in, and make that Action, that was a ſin, to become again a Duty: And more new accidents may make it a ſin again; and ſo over and over: Even as when you are weighing in the Ballance, one Grain may turn the Scales the other way, and two more in the other end may turn them back again; and three more in the other end may yet return them, and ſo on many times over and over. For Inſtance, Suppoſe an honeſt Man cannot pray without ſome unſeemly faults in utterance; in ſecret it is his Duty to pray vocally if that moſt profit and affect his heart; if an exceptious Perſon be known to over-hear him, it may be a ſin to do it audibly: If his Family be capable of bearing it, it is his Duty to do it as he can: If ſtrangers come in that would by ſcorn make it do more hurt than good, he may be bound to forbear till they are gone: When they are gone it is his Duty again: A Fire breaketh out, or one falleth into a ſwound, and it is his Duty to forbear: When that is over, it may be his Duty again, *&c.*

Pr. 25. Two ſorts therefore ſin againſt God, that would tye Men to do the very ſame things, of ſuch a mutable Nature, without excepting the mutation of accidents,

cidents: 1. Thoſe that will tye them to it by peremptory Laws: 2. Thoſe that will cenſoriouſly reproach or condemn them as ſinners, that do not do juſt as they do, when the Circumſtances alter the Caſe: Many are ſo guilty who complain of other Mens Impoſitions.

Pr. 26. Hence it is evident, that *Prudence, diſcerning how the alteration of accidents alter our Obligations*, is a very needful thing to Chriſtians, for the ſame guidance of their hearts and lives: And as Men picture *Juſtice* as holding the Ballance, ſo ſhould *Chriſtian Prudence* be thought on, even as judging of Good and Evil with the Ballance in our hand, and putting every Grain of conſiderable accidents into each end: And much errour, cenſoriouſneſs, diſorder, and other ſin is in the World, by ignorant Mens judging of things by ſome miſtaken word of Scripture, without prudent weighing of Circumſtances, and diſcerning which preponderateth: There were Circumſtances in which *Paul* would ſhave his Head, and Circumciſe *Timothy*, and become a Jew to the Jews; and there were Circumſtances in which he ſaith, *If ye be Circumciſed Chriſt ſhall profit you nothing: Stand faſt in the liberty with which Chriſt hath made you free.*

Pr. 27. Hence the common People, who cannot be expected to have a ſufficient meaſure of ſuch ponderating Prudence, do need *ſpiritual Guides*; who ſhould be good *Caſuiſts*, and endowed with ſo much accurateneſs of *Sapience, and Prudence*, as to be able to examine all the Circumſtances of Actions, (as Phyſicians muſt do about their Patients Caſe) and to ſee when one Grain or Accident doth indeed determine them to be good or evil.

Pr. 28. And the *Laws of juſt Governours* being made by Men that muſt be preſumed to be wiſer than the ordinary Subjects, in the matters which belong to their own

Office; as also the *decision* of a *spiritual Casuist* and *Pastor*; if either of them be put into a Ballance that before stood equal, are an additional Accident which must turn the Scales: Supposing that the former equality, or suspense, was not from the Persons sinful *ignorance*, or *negligence*.

Prop. 29. But in such variety of Cases and intricate difficulties, God doth not lay our *safety*, *peace*, *and comfort*, upon such degrees of accurateness and Prudence as we cannot attain, though truly willing and faithfully endeavouring it by sincere diligence: Nor is God pleased that Men be over scrupulous, or over solicitous, about lesser doubtful Circumstances; that is, that we neglect the Duty it self, or too much delay it, or live in self-distracting uncomfortable despondencies; making God's service burdensome and grievous to us, either by an over troublesome and tedious care of some less accident, or because we can do the work no more exactly: Like a Servant that instead of his days work and journey, would sit down and spend half the day in crying because he can do no better, or in curious enquiries about lesser Circumstances: But God would have us upon our sincere willingness, and a proportionable fidelity in enquiry, to do his service chearfully as well as we can; and to go on as believing that we have a merciful God, a sufficient and a pardoning Covenant, and expect with joy his acceptance of our sincerity.

Pr. 30. He that would tell Rulers that they may lawfully command every thing which is not evil in the Physical Action, considered without its Accidents; or that is not evil in the *first* Accidents or Circumstances that cloth it, will teach them to cast off Religion and common honesty and justice, and to own more iniquity than ever *Mahomet*, or any false Prophet to our knowledge, hath

hath defended, and ſuch as Satan himſelf hath confeſſed to be evil.

*Pr.*31. No man may command others any action, which is by accident unlawful to be commanded: For it is ſin, if ſin by accident.) But Rulers may command many things, which the Subject may by accident make ſinful for himſelf to do, (as ſhall be ſhewed.)

Pr. 32. For there are ſome accidents rendring the act ſinful, which a Ruler may and ought to make proviſion againſt, or prevent: And there are ſome which he neither can prevent, nor is bound therefore to forbear or change his Law. For inſtance,

Pr. 33. No man is bound to forbear a Law or Practice, which is commanded of God, or is neceſſary to a greater good, (as Gods Glory, the Publick ſafety, the ſalvation of many, or himſelf, &c.) leſt ſome man ſhould turn it to his own ſin and ruine: Gods Laws muſt not be broken, nor the Publick Welfare hazarded, to ſave a particular perſon from himſelf, and from his ſinful inclinations to ill doing.

Pr. 34. As to a circumſtance that is indifferent antecedently to further accidents, and if it be determined one way will do accidentally a great deal of good and a little hurt; and if the other way, it will do a little good and a great deal of hurt; the Ruler, if he foreſee it, muſt determine it the firſt way, notwithſtanding the accidental hurt (whether ſin or ſuffering) which will follow. Becauſe a greater hurt is more carefully to be avoided than a leſs, and a greater good more carefully to be endeavoured than a leſs: *E. g.* If the Army be appointed to meet at ſuch a day and place, ſome *few* Souldiers (one of a thouſand) will mutiny and not appear: If at another time and place, *moſt of them* will mutiny. Or if a

Congregation be appointed to meet at ſuch an Hour and Place for Cods Worſhip, and join with ſuch a worthy Teacher, one of an hundred will ſchiſmatically ſeparate: If in another Place, at another Hour, with another worthy Teacher, an hundred to one will ſeparate. Here the Ruler muſt firſt avoid the *greater* Evil that by accident will follow. If one peeviſh hearer will ſinfully ſeparate if the Preacher uſe Sermon Notes, or if he uſe ſuch a Tranſlation, ſuch a Metre, ſuch Tunes of Pſalms, if he pray freely without a Form, or if he uſe the ſame words often as a Form; and if an *hundred to one* are for the *contrary*, and would ſeparate if he did *otherwiſe*, the *greater Evil by Accident* muſt be avoided before the leſs.

Pr. 35. So much are wicked Men inclined to turn all things into ſin, that it is not poſſible to command any thing ſo good, which bad Men may not make a ſinful uſe of: Sin taketh occaſion of God's own Commandments, *Ro.* 7. 8.

Pr. 36. No Ruler is bound to ſuſpect and prevent ſuch unuſual dangers of mens ſin, or ruine, as fall out beyond all rational fore-ſight or expectation, of whoſe probable event, or poſſible at leaſt, there was no juſt evidence.

Pr. 37. *Cæteris paribus*, an equal *certain* hurt muſt rather be avoided, than an equal *uncertain* hurt, much more an *improbable* one.

Pr. 38. The *equal* danger of a more *Publick worthy Perſon* is to be avoided more than the danger of a *Private, or leſs worthy Perſon.* And ſo in other Inſtances: Rulers muſt weigh all diſcernable Accidents, and prudently prefer the *greateſt Good*, and moſt avoid the greateſt Evil.

Pr. 39. Seeing it is *Accidents* that make moſt Actions

Good

Good or Evil, it is the Office, Skill, and Honour of Rulers to avoid as many *ill accidents*, and prevent as *many ſins by accident*, as is poſſible: And as the Multitude of his Patients Funerals is the Phyſicians diſhonour, and the Multitude of Cures is his honour; ſo is it to the Ruler (allowing neceſſary diſparities) as to Mens ſins by accidents.

Pr. 40. If *Good as Good* be amiable, then the *greateſt Good* as ſuch is *moſt amiable*, and to be preferrd before the leſs: And when the difference is *known*, or ſuch as Rulers are *obliged to know*, the leſs cannot be preferred without ſin; and ſuch as is againſt the very Nature of Goodneſs, and of Man's Will. It is not therefore a *thing indifferent*, nor the matter of God's *Counſel*, which is no Law.

Pr. 41. But to know of ſeveral *Goods* which is moſt eligible, or the greateſt, is a matter of great difficulty in many Inſtances, in which conſiſteth no ſmall part of the Chriſtian Wiſdom, Work, and Life. The Rules of ſuch diſcerning are elſewhere laid down, by ſuch as have written on that Subject; ſee *Chriſtian Direct. p.*137. *&c.*

Pr. 42. A Good that in it ſelf is *Leſſer* may be the matter of a *Greater Duty*, *pro hic & nunc*, becauſe the *Greater* may have *another ſeaſon* when the Leſſer cannot: *E.G.* to ſave a Soul, or to build a Church may be a better work than to quench the Fire in an Houſe: And yet for that time the quenching of the Fire may be the greater Duty, becauſe it can be done no other time, when the other may; and ſo *both done* in their ſeveral ſeaſons are better than one alone.

Pr. 43. A *greater Good* may be *no Duty* to him that is not called to do it; as preaching to a Woman, or unable Lay-man: To Rule well as a King is a greater Good than pri-

private Buſineſs; and yet private Men muſt not uſurp it, but let it alone as no work of theirs. The Subject muſt not take up the Rulers work, nor the Child the Fathers, nor the Wife the Husbands, nor the Scholar the Teachers, becauſe it is better.

Pr. 44. A Rulers Command will not juſtifie *all ſcandal given* by the Act commanded, nor make that Act lawful: Nor will all *ſcandal*, that we foreknow will thence be taken, excuſe us from obeying the Rulers Command in the offending Act. It is therefore a matter of great difficulty and prudence ſometimes to diſcern, whether the *Rulers Command*, or the *ſcandalouſneſs*, or *accidental hurtfulneſs* of the Act, put into the Counterballance, do weigh down the other.

Pr. 45. If Governours determine Circumſtances *antecedently indifferent*, (as the *place* and *hour* of Aſſemblies, *&c.*) that way which ſome will be ſcandalized at, and turn to their ſin and hurt, when they might have avoided this occaſion of their ſin, by another way, without any, or ſo great a hurt; this is the *Governours ſin* ſo to miſ-do: But it may, notwithſtanding, be a Duty in the Subject to obey that Determination; becauſe, 1. It is a Command of a Ruler in his place: 2. The thing is ſuppoſed not only *lawful*, but ſuch as doth *more good for Concord*, as it is a *Determination of Authority*, than it doth *hurt* by *Mens miſtake*: (of which we have ſpoken in another Paper.) As, *e. g.* ſome are ſo offended at the old Metre of our ſinging Pſalms, that they will ſeparate from the worſhip on that account: Suppoſe that the Magiſtrate, and Paſtors, will uſe them and no other: If *they ſin* in chuſing no better, and if my uſing them be *offenſive* to them that ſeparate, yet is it my Duty and the reſt of the Peoples to obey the Magiſtrate and Paſtor, and

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joyn with the Church in using them, rather than separate as others do (for many reasons.)

Pr. 46. Of the Nature, Kinds, Causes, and Cure of Scandal given and taken, one of us hath written so much (*Christian Directory*, *Tom.* 4. *p.* 80. *&c.*) as may excuse the omission of the same in this writing.

But we must still desire the Reader to note, that the word [Scandal] is among us variously used: 1. Sometime by the vulgar for meer *displeasing* or *grieving* another, especially in matters of Religion: 2. Sometime for [*a seeming sinfulness*:] So a *Scandal* is said to be raised of a Man when he is (truly or falsly) accused of sin, especially a disgraceful sin: And a Man is called *scandalous*, and scandalized, when others (justly or unjustly) report him to be a disgraceful Sinner; and he is called a *Scandal* in the place where he liveth for that Infamy: 3. The use of the word in the Gospel is, for *any thing that is a Snare* or *Trap* or Stumbling-block to others, to keep or hinder them by Temptation, from Faith, Repentance, Holiness, or Salvation.

Pr. 47. *Love kindled by Faith*, and Faith kindling *Love*, and Love working in the order of Obedience, is the Sum of all our Duty, or Religion. To love our Neighbours as our selves, and exercise Love in doing good to all as we are able, is indispensible Duty: (We speak of Natural and Moral-legal Power Conjunct: *Illud possumus quod & animæ corporisq; viribus, & jure possumus*:) Seeing then that Love is the fulfilling of God's Law, no Rulers Law can disoblige us from it; no, not to our very Enemies: Nor are they disobliged themselves.

Pr. 48. He breaketh the sixth Command [*Thou shalt not Murder*] who doth not do his best to save his Neighbours

bours Life in danger: Much more if he voluntarily and unneceſſarily do that, which he knew, or ought to know, would be the occaſion and means abuſed to effect it. He that oweth maintenance to another, and denyeth it him, is guilty of his ſuffering though he take nothing from him: *E. G.* He that provideth not Food for the Life of his Child, and famiſheth him by ſuch omiſſion: He that ſuffereth his Neighbour to famiſh when he might relieve him: Yea, or his Enemy, except when in Wars, or a Courſe of Juſtice, he may take away his Life. He that ſeeth his Neighbour in Fire, or Water, or among Thieves, and could ſave him by lawful means, and doth not, is guilty of his Blood. So is he that ſeeth his Neighbour in Drunkenneſs, Folly, or Paſſion, making away himſelf, and doth not ſave him from himſelf, if he can.

Much more is he guilty of Murder, who wilfully ſelleth Poyſon to him, who he knoweth doth intend to kill his Neighbour, or himſelf; much more his Prince with it: And if we have any Caſuiſts more looſe than the Jeſuites accuſed by *Montaltus*, who will juſtifie this, becauſe that ſelling Arſenick, *&c.* is lawful *per ſe*, and unlawful only *per accidens*, ye we ſuppoſe that the Judges would be ſtricter Caſuiſts, in judging him to puniſhment that ſinned thus *per accidens*: And as Gods Laws reaching the Conſcience are ſtricter in ſuch things than Mans, ſo ſhould the Expoſitors of them be than the Judges. And we hope that our Caſuiſts will never ſee a Law ſo made, that ſhall *Command* (or *tolerate*) all Apothecaries to ſell Poyſon to thoſe that they know mean to uſe it to Treaſon, or Murder; and ſhall ſay, you are not bound to neglect your Trade, your Right, or Liberty, to prevent another Mans ſin, and abuſing it to his own,

own, or others hurt: Our Law-makers will never ſay, we may Command this, becauſe it is ſin but *per accidens:* When *Intereſt* is againſt their Errour, who by *Intereſt* were led into it, it will then be eaſie to ſee the evil of ſuch *commanding* (yea, or conniving at) ſin *per accidens.* Till then it is hard curing them, whom miſtaken *Intereſt* blindeth, of the moſt Inhumane Errour.

Pr. 49. We therefore who are called *Non-Conformiſts*, (and *Puritans*, by Men whoſe *Intereſt* dictateth reproaches) do now confeſs, that, whereas we once hoped that we had differed but in leſſer things from our Accuſers, we do find our ſelves ſo far miſtaken, as that ſome of them, who have thought it worth their labour to write vehemently for our reproach and increaſed ſufferings, do differ from us in the Vitals of our Religion, even of our *Belief*, our *Love*, and *Practice*. We mean ſuch as hold [" That all the Obligations of Scandal pro-" ceed purely from that extraordinary height of Charity, " and tenderneſs of good Nature, that is ſo ſignally re-" commended in the Goſpel: —— But if it proceed " from humour, or pride, or wilfulneſs, or any other " vitious Principle, then is the Man to be treated as a " peeviſh and ſtubborn Perſon; and no Man is bound to " part with his own freedom, becauſe his Neighbour " is froward and humorous: and if he be reſolved to fall, " there is no reaſon I ſhould forego the uſe of my liberty, " becauſe he is reſolved to make that his Stumbling-" block. *Eccleſiaſt. Polit. page* 231.]

Becauſe this is contrary to that very Religion in which only we hope for Salvation, we take the boldneſs to put theſe few Queſtions to them who thus judge.

Q. 1. Is not *Love* the fulfilling of the Law, and the End of the Goſpel, and *Faith working by Love*, the Sum

of Christian Religion? Doth not the Law of Nature oblige us to *love* our Neighbour as our selves?

Q. 2. Doth not God beneficently love his Enemies; even the sinful, the humorous, the proud, and the peevish? Did not Christ come to seek and save them? Is there not joy in Heaven for their Repentance? Doth not God welcome such Prodigals when they return, *Luke* 16. and call, invite, and intreat them to return?

Q. 3. Are we not Commanded to be merciful as our Heavenly Father is merciful; and to love even our Enemies, and pray for Persecutors, that we may be like him? And is not this a Natural Common Duty?

Q. 4. Hath not God sent out his Ministers to preach home such sinners; and commanded them to do it instantly, in season and out of season, reproving and exhorting, and with meekness, to instruct opposers, if God peradventure will give them Repentance to the acknowledging of the Truth? And must we not labour hard, and suffer much, for to win such Souls?

Q. 5. Should not every thing be valued according to its worth? And are not the Souls of such as you call *humorous, peevish, or wilful*, worth more than some of that which you call your *Liberty*? Are they not worth more than a Pipe of Tobacco, or a Cup of Sack, or a Stage-play, or a needless Ceremony; which you account part of your Liberty? Would you deny none of these to save many Souls?

Q. 6. Would you not deny your Liberty in a Cup of Drink, or a Pipe of Tobacco, to save the *Life* of one that in humour would destroy himself? or his House, who would set it on fire?

Q. 7. If not, doth this Religion of yours much commend it self to the Nature of Mankind? Or is he that writeth

writeth this fit to report us of the other mind, unfit for ſubjection, or Humane Society? Can *Chriſtians* be of your Religion?

Q. 8. Are not *Souls* more worth than *Bodies*? And ſhould not the Soul of a Sinner be as compaſſionately ſaved by us as his Body, as far as we are able, and at as dear a rate?

Q. 9. Is that Man like to profit his Hearers, or be taken for a faithful Paſtor, or an honour to the Church of *England*, who would tell them, [I would not forſake a Pipe of Tobacco, or a lawful ſport or jeaſt, to ſave any of your Souls, who are vitious, humourous, or peeviſh?]

Q. 10. Doth not this doleful Doctrine tell Men conſequently, that they ſhould ſeek to ſave the Soul of no Sinner in the World? For if you, 1. Except all that have humour, pride, wilfulneſs, or any other vitious Principle; 2. And that but ſo far prevalent as to be reſolved to *make a Stumbling-block of ſome liberty of anothers*: What Sinner almoſt is not here excluded from your Charity? Who is it that hath not as great ſin as ſome humorous, or peeviſh ſtumbling at ſome lawful thing? or who is it that hath no *pride*, no *peeviſhneſs*, no *humorouſneſs*, or at leaſt that hath *no vitious Principle at all*? Is not that Man perfectly holy? 3. And if to ſave ſuch an one you would not ſo much as deny any of your *liberty* for him, what would you do for him at all? Who can expect that you ſhould beſtow any great *labour* or *coſt* to do good, or ſave a Sinner, that would not loſe a Cup of Sack to ſave him?

Q. 11. Do you not thus reproach Chriſt, that ſet a higher price on Souls, when you value them not at the price of a Cup of Drink? Would you have

it believed that they are purchaſed by his Blood?

Q. 12. Would you have God care no more for *your ſoul*, and value it at no higher a rate? Doth he believe the immortality of Souls who will ſay ſo?

Q. 13. Should God give ſuch a Law to all his Creatures, for their acting towards your ſelf and one another; *q. d.* [Deny not ſo much as a lawful Jeaſt, or Sport, or Ceremony, to win and ſave any one in the world, that out of any vitious principle will ſtumble at your liberty;] what Family, or Common-wealth, could ſubſiſt under ſuch an inhumane privation of love?

Q. 14. If you loved your Neighbour as *your ſelf*, and did as you would have others do to you, would you deny no lawful thing to ſave his Soul, though he had ſome vitious principle?

Q. 15. What will people ſay of ſuch men as you, if you ſhall ever preach for Love and Good Works, and would make people believe that its you that are for them, and we againſt them; when they compare this Doctrine with your words?

Q. 16. Why do ſuch men call us *Puritans*, as if we ſucceeded the old Catharists (or *Perfectioniſts*) and the Novatians, when we are ſo far from ſo vilifying ſinners that have a *vitious principle*, and ſin againſt ſome lawful thing, by taking it for unlawful, that we know none in the world that hath no *vitious principle*, and is not to be helped at a dearer rate?

And ſeeing we find ſuch real difference in our very Religion it ſelf, from ſuch as this, we cannot wonder if men of ſuch Principles uſe us and the Nation no better than they do: But we crave their ſolid reſolving of theſe Doubts, if they will loſe ſo much of their Eaſe and Liberty, for the convincing of perſons judged ſo unworthy.

Pr. 50. For our parts we muſt profeſs, that we take it to be our duty not only to deny a lawful thing, or our liberty therein, for the ſaving of Souls that have vitious principles and humours, but to beſtow our labours, and endure poverty, reproach, perſecution, impriſonment, and, when God calls us to it, death it ſelf, to ſerve Chriſt in the ſaving of ſuch Souls.

Pr. 51. We ſuppoſe that Chriſt and his Apoſtles were of the ſame mind, when Chriſt would have a *right hand* or a *right eye* rather loſt, than the Soul ſhould be hazarded by the *ſcandal* or temptation of it. And when he would pay *Cæſar* Tribute when he was free, rather than *offend men.* And when he ſo dreadfully ſpeaketh of them *that offend or ſcandalize one of the little ones*, even *weak Believers*, as that it were better for them that a Milſtone were hanged on their necks, and they were caſt into the Sea: *Mat.* 5. and 18. 8. *Mar.* 9. 42, 43. *Mat.* 17. 27. and 18. 6. *Rom.* 14. 13, 14, *&c.* This was S. *Paul*'s judgment, [*Let us not judge one another any more, but judge this rather, that no man put a ſtumbling block, or an occaſion to fall, in his Brothers way. I know, and am perſwaded by the Lord Jeſus, that there is nothing unclean of it ſelf; but to him that eſteemeth any thing unclean, to him it is unclean. But if thy Brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkeſt thou not charitably: Deſtroy not him with thy meat for whom Chriſt dyed: Let not your good be evil ſpoken of: For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteouſneſs and peace and joy in the Holy Ghoſt: For he that in theſe things ſerveth Chriſt, is acceptable to God, and approved of men: Let us therefore follow after the things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edifie another. For meat deſtroy not the work of God: All things indeed are pure; but it is*

evil

evil for that man who eateth with offence. It is good neither to eat Fleſh, nor drink Wine, nor that whereby thy Brother ſtumbleth, or is offended, or made weak. Haſt thou faith? have it to thy ſelf before God: Happy is he that condemneth not himſelf in that thing which he alloweth: And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, becauſe its not of faith: For whatſoever is not of faith is ſin. This was *Paul's* Doctrine then, even to all the Church of *Rome.*

So on, *Rom.* 15. 1, *&c. We then that are ſtrong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to pleaſe our ſelves. Let every one of us pleaſe his Neighbour for his good, to edification: For even Chriſt pleaſed not himſelf.---- Now the God of patience and conſolation, grant you to be like minded one towards another, according to Chriſt Jeſus.*

So 1 *Cor.* 8. 9. *But take heed leſt by any means this liberty of yours become a Stumbling-block to them that are weak.--- 13. Wherefore if Meat make my Brother to offend, I will eat no Fleſh while the World ſtandeth, leſt I make my Brother to offend.*]

Remember that he that ſpake this had as great Church-authority as any Biſhop, and ſpake this as an Apoſtles and not as a meer private Man.

Pr. 52. The ſame Author ſaith, (*Eccl. Polit. p.* 230.) that this School-diſtinction (of *ſcandalum datum & acceptum*) *is apparently falſe and impertinent, and the main thing that hath perplexed all diſcourſes of this Article.*]

But we ſee no Reaſon to think, that the generality of both Proteſtants & Papiſts are herein miſtaken, & this Writer is in the right, or that the School Doctors need go to School to him to reform ſuch Errors: It is a Moral Subject, & *Given and Taken* are *morally* meant; that is, *There is ſcandal*

dal culpably given, and there is *ſcandal culpably taken only*, and not ſo given. The diſtinction is of the Parties *culpable*. All which is culpably *taken* is not *culpably* given: A man that either purpoſely or negligently ſpeaketh injurious provoking words, doth *give* the temptation of wrath to the hearer: But he that ſpeaketh words which in themſelves have no tendency to provoke, nor was obliged to foreſee that they would provoke, doth *give* no ſcandal; (no nor he that juſtly and aptly reproveth:) But a peeviſh or impatient ſinner may yet *take ſcandal* from them. He that leaveth Arſenick where he ſhould know that another is like to take it to his death, whether he do it purpoſely or negligently (that is by the *Wills commiſſion* or *omiſſion*) is the reputed *Giver*, or Moral Cauſe, of that Man's death. But he that leaveth it where he could not know, and was not obliged to fear, that another would ſo take and uſe it, may ſay, *It was taken by him*, and not *given by me*.

An alluring Habit, Actions, and Geſtures, which have a Natural tendency to provoke others to ſinful luſts, have ever been condemned by all ſober Divines as *Scandal Given*; which yet chaſte Perſons may refuſe to *Take*: But if the ſobereſt and modeſteſt Habit prove a Snare, it is a Scandal *Taken*, and not culpably given: (As a Thief, if he ſteal my Knife and cut his own Throat with it, cannot ſay that I gave it him.) He that ſpeaketh words which are apt to tempt the hearer to Treaſon or Rebellion, doth *give* the Scandal: But if by the reading of any Chapter in the Bible, any will be incited to Rebellion or Diſloyalty; or if by the innocent, neceſſary, and ſober defence of a juſt Cauſe, any will be tempted to think unworthily of his Governours or Judges, he *Taketh Scandal* that is not *culpably Given* him.

Pr. 52. If a Man were bound to forbear all that others will turn into an occaſion of ſin, he ſhould not only *loſe all his liberty*, but omit *all his Duty*: And to think that we are bound to deny *no liberty*, or *nothing indifferent* to prevent or cure the ſin of others, is to deny the common Principles of Humanity; and on pretenſe of *Juſtice* to renounce comomn *Charity*, and to become an Adverſary to the great Precepts of Chriſt and his Apoſtles. Therefore the difficulty is to reſolve *how far*, and *in what caſes, our liberty muſt be denyed, to ſave other Men from ſin; and conſequently from damnation*; which muſt be determined by the great General Canons: [*Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thy ſelf: Whatſoever you would that Men ſhould do to you, ſo do to them: Let all be done to Edification: Prefer a greater Good before a leſs; and moſt avoid the greateſt Evil:* Cæteris paribus, *the moſt Publick good (of many) is the greateſt: Sin is a greater Evil, than bodily wants and ſufferings.*]

No Ruler may Command any thing which is contrary (though but by accident) to the Law of God, in Nature and Scripture expreſſed: Charity and Juſtice are Commanded by the Law of Nature and Scripture: When *accidentally* the Man that fell among Thieves was wounded, and naked, Charity obliged the Prieſt and Levite to have relieved him. If by accident Fire conſume Mens Habitations, Charity requireth others to relieve them.

Eſpecially where the Obligation is great and ſpecial, As for Parents to feed their Children: If Rulers forbid them, and ſo would have them murder them by Famine, the Command is ſinful, and the Obligation null; becauſe they cannot diſſolve the Obligation of God's Natural Laws.

And

And the exercise of Charity to *Believers*, that are the Members of Christ, is a Duty that none may Countermand; and the Commands of none can disoblige us from: For *Mat.* 25. Christ tells us that he will judge Men, according to their exercised Charity to his Servants, to everlasting Life, or everlasting Punishment. Yet Christ foreknew, and foretold Men, that much of this Charity must be exercised against the Wills of many of the Rulers of the World.

Much less may Rulers prohibit the due exercise of Charity to Mens Souls, or can oblige Men by such prohibitions: As to instruct an Unbeliever, exhort a Blasphemer, Idolater, Adulterer, a Thief, a Murderer, *&c.* to repent.

And much less yet may Rulers forbid the means of Mens Salvation, to be used by the *faithful Ministers* of Christ, who by Covenant in their Ordination are specially thereto obliged.

And least of all may any Rulers Command, or can oblige Men, to kill Men unjustly, or to draw Men to sin, or to deceive them by false teaching, or any thing else, that directly, or by accident, is like to procure their damnation, except in the Cases hereafter excepted.

Pr. 54. Though Rulers cannnot *destroy Charity*, they may Regulate it in due Subordination to God's Laws: *E. G.* They may make Laws that the Poor shall be kept in their own Parishes, and not beg abroad; and forbid relieving them that so beg. They may forbid Parents to cram their Children to excess. They may forbid Ministers the unnecessary, and irregular, intruding into other Mens Pulpits, or Assemblies, or Families; and such like.

Pr. 55. And they may forbid Men *doing hurt* on pre-

tenſes of Charity: *E. G.* Phyſicians to give Men pernicious Drugs; or Preachers or others, to ſeduce Men to Idolatry, or blaſpheme Chriſt, or draw Men to Mahumetaniſme, Socinianiſme, *&c.* or to preach Rebellion, or ſeek to bring the Subjects into ſubjection to a Forreign Prince, or Eccleſiaſtical Uſurper; or uncalled and unfit Men, to make themſelves unneceſſarily Publick Teachers, to the diſgrace of the ſacred Doctrine which they abuſe, and hindrance of Mens ſalvation, and of the Publick peace and ſafety.

Pr. 56. In a word, Rulers may forbid all things *not Commanded by God*, though *ſeemingly Charitable*, or *good by accident*, when *contrary accidents notoriouſly preponderate*, and it is certain, or moſt probable, to Men of true judgement, to whoſe Cognizance it belongeth, that the *thing will do more hurt than good*, and tendeth more to deſtruction, than to edification

Pr. 57. The *Time*, *Place*, and other Circumſtances of a Duty may be at the Governours Determination, when the *Duty it ſelf* is not: And they may forbid the Duty it ſelf, as to that *Time*, *and Place*, *&c.* when a greater good, at that Time, requireth it. *E. G.* They may forbid reſting on the Lords-day, in time of a Fire, Inundation, or a Siege, when defence is neceſſary: They may forbid ſome Publick Aſſemblies in time of a great Peſtilence, to prevent infection: They may Command Men out of the Church to quench a Fire, *&c.*

Pr. 58. It is certain that Rulers have not Power from God to deſtroy the Duties Commanded by God, on any pretenſes of Regulating, or duly Circumſtantiating, or ordering them; or of being the Judges: (As is elſewhere ſhewed.) For they have their Power to edification, and not deſtruction; and are the Miniſters of God for

for Good. *E. G.* If on pretenſe of forbidding hurtful Preachers and Seducers, they forbid ſound Doctrine, or *neceſſary* preaching of it. *Conſtantius* and *Valens* might not ſet up *Arrians*, and caſt out and forbid the Orthodox, on pretenſe that they were the Judges. So if on pretenſe of reſtraining unneceſſary ſupernumeraries, they forbid, or ſilence, one half the neceſſary Number: Or if on pretenſe of keeping Order, they commit the charge of Fifty Thouſand or One Hundred Thouſand Souls to one, or two Men, who cannot poſſibly ſupply the real neceſſities of Five Thouſand of them; and forbid all others to help the reſt, as intruders into another Mans Charge: (On which pretenſe they might keep almoſt all the People from the Goſpel, by committing a Kingdom or County only to one Man:) So alſo if on pretenſe of any croſs intereſt of their own, they would prohibit Chriſt's Goſpel: Or if they will forbid Men to preach, becauſe they will not make a Covenant againſt ſome Law of God, or will not lye, or be perjured, or prophane God's Ordinances, or own falſe Doctrine, or diſown the very Law of Nature, calling this Non-conformity, Diſobedience, or Schiſme. Yea, if they forbid neceſſary helps to Mens Salvation, becauſe the Teachers be not all of one Opinion about ſome unneceſſary Controverſie, or Ceremony: As if all the *Lutherans* would ſilence all called *Calveniſts*, or they the *Lutherans*, or *Arminians*: Much more unlawful is it for Rulers themſelves to be the *Makers* of ſuch ſnares and occaſions of diſſent, and then to impoſe them by ſuch penalties, that none ſhall preach the Goſpel of Chriſt, that will not conſent to them, how great ſoever the neceſſity be. As, *e. g.* God hath not forbidden wearing a pair of Horns: If Rulers ſhould make Laws that none ſhall preach the Goſpel that will

not wear Horns in preaching, in token that the Word of God ſhall puſh down the Powers of Sin and Satan, this is an unlawful Command. So if on pretenſe of ordering the Place of Worſhip, Men be commanded to ſuch a diſtance, or confined to ſo ſmall a room, as deſtroyeth the End of the Work it ſelf, and depriveth moſt of all poſſibility of the Benefit.

Pr. 59. Rulers ought not to command any thing which will notably do more harm than good, nor make an unneceſſary thing a means or occaſion of excluding the neceſſary Worſhip of God, or Preaching of his Goſpel. Nor will their ſaying that *neceſſary Teaching* is not *neceſſary*, or that *they* are the *Judges of Neceſſity*, or that *Hereticks* are *Orthodox*, or the *Orthodox* are *Hereticks*, or that *Uſurpers* only are duly *called*, and others are *Schiſmaticks*, or that *ignorant inſufficient* Preachers are *ſufficient*, or that *more* in *number* are not neceſſary, when indeed they are; none of this will excuſe their ſin, nor diſoblige Chriſts Servants from the obedience of his Laws.

Pr. 60. If ſtill ignorant or fraudulent men ſhould ask us, *ad rancedinem uſque, who ſhall be Judge of Order and Neceſſity*, we again and again repeat our undenyable Anſwer; 1. That the *eſſe rei* is before the *ſcire*: Either the thing is really *true and good* which they judge *true and good*, or it is *falſe and bad*; and no mans falſe judging will change the thing: (*e. g.* Our Preaching is *ſound* and *neceſſary*, or it is not.) 2. The *Magiſtrate* is the *Publick Judge* who ſhall be *protected* or *puniſhed by the Sword*. The *Paſtors* are the *Publick Judges* who is fit for Church-Communion, and who not. And all the Subjects are the rational Private *diſcerning* Judges of their Duty: This no man can with a face of Reaſon deny. But all

theſe

these are Subjects to God, and limited by him in their Judging Power, and not enabled to judge falsly, that Evil is Good and Good is Evil: what Good is such by Nature or Accident, they cannot make Evil, and forbid what God commandeth on pretense of judging. They have Power to judge that all the Articles of our Faith are true, but not that any of them are false: They are Judges that the Commands of God must be all kept, but have no power to judge the contrary. In what Cases we may be bound to obey them when they erre, we have opened in another Paper, and may partly be discerned from what is here said.

Pr. 61. The Bishops or Pastors of the Church are above others obliged, to exercise paternal tender love to all the Peoples Souls. If they are *peevish*, and *humorous*, and *quarrelsome*, and *proud*, and *have other vitious Principles*, it is their Office and Work under Christ to cure them, and to use all that gentleness and forbearance which is needful to their cure; and to become all things (lawful) to all men, to win and edifie them: (not doing *greater hurt* by injuring *others*, or the *Publick Good*, for the sake of those that are *few* or *less considerable*.) If therefore they should either scandalize them and hinder their salvation by things unnecessary, or whose good will not countervail the hurt; or if they should say, we are not bound to forsake our own *Liberty* (no not in a trifle) for the sake of such as are inclined to offence by their vitious Principles, they seem to us much to forget or renounce their proper Callings, as well as Humane Charity to Souls; as if a Physician should say, I am not bound to medicate any that are sick, but only those that are in health. And if all that have *vitious Principles* be so far

from

from under the Ministers bare, we see no Reason why the Kingdom should maintain so needless a Ministry, at so dear a rate; nor why they should be had in so much honour, and why we should not all be silenced at once.

Pr. 62. The sin of tyrannical abuse of Power is so contrary to the Nature of all Good Rulers, and so contrary to their own true interest, peace, and comfort, and final justification before God, and so contrary to the welfare of all Mankind, and doth at this day so much mischief in the world, by serving Satan, maintaining Idolatry, Mahometanism, Popery, and Prophaneness, and keeping out the Gospel from the most of the whole world, that the Flatterers that would for their own ends and carnal interests promote it, and make all odious to Rulers that dislike it, will one day be known to be the great Enemies of Princes and People, of Church and State, of Jesus Christ and God the Soveraign Lord of all.

Pr. 63. And Confusion, Anarchy, Popular Rage, Faction and Sedition, dishonouring our Rulers, and all Rebellions and Schisms, must be odious to all men of Interest, Wisdom, and true Religion, as being ultimately against the God of Order, and the Glory of his Wisdom and Soveraignty in Government, who is to be honoured and obeyed in Kings, in Pastors, and Parents, and all that are under him authorized to Govern us.

Pr. 64. Perjury, justifying thousands in perjury, deliberate lying, covenanting against great and known Duty, corrupting Gods Worship and Church Government, cruel denying christendom and salvation to the Infants of thousands of godly Christians, and casting out godly Christians from the Churches Communion causelesly for a gesture, pronouncing all Atheists, Infidels, Adulterers,

rers, and other wicked Perſons ſaved, ſo be it they be not unbaptized, excommunicate, or make away themſelves; none of theſe, nor any ſuch other, in our judgment will ever be made lawful by any Command or Accident, nor will ever be lawfully commanded; nor ſhall we ever number them with Things Indifferent, nor revile or perſecute any as humorous, obſtinate, diſobedient, Schiſmaticks, or ſeditious, for refuſing them.

FINIS.

What Meer Non-Conformity is not:

THE PROFESSION OF SEVERAL WHOM THESE TIMES

Have made and called

NON-CONFORMISTS.

Printed in the Year, 1676.

Printed in the Year, 1676.

What Meer Non-conformity is not.

THat we may not, after near fourteen Years ſuffering and ſilence, yet tell the World *what our Non-conformity is*, without offending our Superiours, and incurring all the cenſures and farther ſufferings which we have reaſon to expect, is more grievous to ſome of us, than all the corporal preſſures by Ejections, Deprivation of Maintenance, Proſecutions, Fines and Impriſonment which we have undergone; when we conſider not only that the little remnant of our opportunities for Miniſterial Work, (the preſervation whereof hath done much to reſtrain us) is by the Odium caſt upon us made leſs profitable to Mens Souls; but eſpecially, how many Thouſands do defile their hearts with falſe uncharitable Conceptions of their Brethren, and their tongues with falſe Reproaches, if not their hands with cruel Proſecutions, becauſe they are falſly informed of our Cauſe: When we think how Satan is ſerved by this; how odious ſins are multiplied through the Land; how Chriſtian Love is killed; and diviſions made among all Ranks of Men, and in all places: When we think how God is hereby provoked, the Land diſhonoured and endangered; and how faſt the guilty poſt one after another into another World, where ſuch work will coſt them dear; with many a heart-tearing groan ſome of us have long ſaid, Muſt we be ſilent and ſee all this? In a Chriſtian ſtate, muſt we be condemned, im-

priſoned, driven about as Rogues and ſeditious Perſons, and our Miniſtry vilified, and that by Clergy-men, who think that it is their right to be believed, and not have leave once to ſpeak for our ſelves, ſo far as to tell men, *what it is* that we take for ſin? and *why* muſt we ſee ſo many Thouſands going in ſuch guilt into another World, and diſtracting a Kingdom that hath been too long diſtracted, and weakening both the Proteſtant and the Chriſtian Intereſt, and by building and keeping up a Wall of ſeparation, ſerving the great Enemy of both? and muſt we not in compaſſion ſpeak for peace, but only ſay as Chriſt, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do*? If God forgive Men he turneth their hearts, and giveth them Repentance. And we are commanded to pray, *Forgive our enemies, perſecutors, and ſlanderers, and turn their hearts*: And muſt we pray, and not endeavour?

At leaſt, now at laſt, we ſhall endeavor to *ſtop* them by this ſhort *Profeſſion*, from believing thoſe Tongues or Pens which tell them, that we make a *Schiſme* for things which *our ſelves confeſs Indifferent*, and that our Nonconformity conſiſteth in what it doth not: If we muſt not tell them *what it is* that we think *men command* and *God forbids*, we may tell them *what it is not*: For this may be ſome ſervice to *themſelves*.

But we muſt premiſe, that if any that are called by *other names*, denoting other Opinions beſides *Meer Nonconformity*, or any Perſons elſe whoſoever, do hold any thing *unlawful* which *we* here *allow*, it is none of our meaning to declare *their judgements*, which they are fitteſt to declare themſelves: We profeſs but *our own*, and ſuch as by familiarity we have had opportunity to underſtand.

Three

Three ſorts we muſt here juſtifie our ſelves againſt, who we know are likely to accuſe us upon unjuſtifiable accounts: I. Thoſe that will be angry that we ſo far undeceive the People, as to acquaint them with our judgement, and the untruth of what they have believed of us: How many ſoever may be guilty of this, it is ſo *diabolical* that we ſuppoſe few will own it, and therefore we need not any farther diſpute it, than to tell them that worldly intereſt, and wicked means will ſerve Mens turns but a little while.

II. Thoſe that will ſay that *we are not all of a mind; one thinks more unlawful, and another leſs; and therefore we are not to be united or agreed with, nor can it be known what will ſatisfie us all.* If the Churches Peace & Concord depend upon ſuch *Heads, and Hearts, and Principles*, as this Objection doth imply, no wonder if it have no Peace or Concord: We are united and agreed with thoſe that differ from us in more than Circumſtances: We will hold Concord with all in *Faith* and *Love* and *Communion* (if they will admit us without our ſinning) upon the Terms ſet down by the Holy Ghoſt and the Apoſtles, *Act.* 15. 28. who would have nothing but neceſſary things impoſed, (or ſuch things, whoſe *Determination one way or other is neceſſary*, though compared each with other they are indifferent;) at leaſt not made *neceſſary* to *Life*, *Liberty*, *Miniſtry*, or *Communion*: we have long learnt from *Rom.* 14. 15. and from that Spirit which indited it, not to judge nor to deſpiſe each other for things of tolerable difference, but to receive each other as Chriſt receiveth us. One Man is not a Church, nor a Kingdom: And if no Men muſt be of the ſame Church or Kingdom that have any difference, yea as great as the Objection can reaſonably ſuppoſe in the Meer Non-conformiſts, we are

ſure.

ſure that no two Men in the World can be of the ſame Church or Kingdom, except you will Compoſe it of ſuch as hold *nothing at all unlawful*, and conſequently nothing morally good, which is no Church. We profeſs that we love them as our ſelves, and ſhall not be guilty of impriſoning, undoing, ſilencing, or excommunicating them, who wear not the ſame Cloaths, and uſe not the ſame Geſture in ſinging, hearing, or reading, as we do; who differ from us in the ſenſe of many a Text of Scripture, who take many things for duty or ſin which we do not; who will not be tyed to uſe no Publick Prayers to God, but what we or others write them down; ſo they hold *one Body, one Spirit, one Hope, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptiſme, one God and Father of all, and will endeavour to keep the unity of the ſpirit in the Bond of Peace, Eph.* 4. 3, 4, 5, 6. We are not for cutting off every Member that is of different ſize or ſhape, 1 *Cor.* 12. God keep us from their *mind and guilt and judgment*, who will hold Love and Communion with none but thoſe, in things *unneceſſary*, of their own opinion or way, or that would ruine and perſecute all the reſt.

III. And ſome *Non-conformiſts* that are *more than ſo*, or *differ from us*, will ſay that we ſhould not have *declared* thus *our judgment*, leſt by differing from them we ſeem *divided*, and *expoſe them* to the greater Odium and Perſecution, becauſe they cannot go ſo far as we.

But, 1. We proteſt againſt the perſecution of ſober godly Chriſtians, on the account of ſuch differences; and are we then guilty of what we deprecate? 2. Did not Mr. *Eaton*, when he wrote that the *Oath of Allegiance and the Covenant bind not*, know that moſt of us were againſt his judgement? To ſay nothing of many more that wrote againſt Epiſcopacy, Presbytery, Infant Baptiſme, Pa-

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riſh Churches, &c. who yet forbore not on any ſuch accounts: Did not Mr. *Nye* and Mr. *Tombes*, when they wrote very well for the Oath of Supremacy, know that in *Scotland* many refuſe it as unlawful? And did they forbear for fear of bringing Perſecution on Diſſenters? Did not Mr. *Nye* write to prove it lawful to hear the Pariſh Miniſters? and Mr. *Tombes* write to prove it lawful both to hear and to communicate with them? And did the fear of bringing Perſecution on others hinder them? 3. Hath not this Reaſon (to keep others from Perſecution) prevailed with us far enough and long enough? 4. Would they have us either by ſpeech or ſilence draw men to believe, that we are of all mens minds whom we would ſave from Perſecution? Muſt we tempt men to think that we are Seekers, Quakers, Separatiſts, Anabaptiſts, leſt we expoſe them to Perſecution? Is not this ſuch Carnal Policy, as if not repented of, will periſh with the Maſters of it? Even to do evil, and to tempt others to evil, and to draw all our Hearers into ſin by our Example, by making them think that we hold that to be *good* or *evil* which we do not? and all this on pretenſe of good? yea to cheriſh the *ſin of many*, leſt *ſome ſhould ſuffer*? 5. The thing is unreaſonable, and the pretenſe is apparently vain: For it is known by our Superiors that we differ already; and yet they who make this Objection have ſuffered never the more, but live a quieter life than we have done. 6. If the Objection implyeth, as it ſeems to do, that we are of their mind that will bear, or live in Communion, with none but thoſe that differ not from them, as far as the Objectors now ſuppoſe, we diſclaim their dividing Principles, and are not of their mind: If they are not for *loving* Chriſtians as Chriſtians, and uſing them accordingly, let them not expect that we ſhould not ſeem to differ from them.

And

And that we do not this that we do without reason, we muſt thus ſhew:

I. It is ſinful when we can help it, to let Clergy-men uncontradicted deceive Mens Souls, and draw and keep both high and low, even many Thouſands in ſin, by perſwading them that we are ſo ſchiſmatical and hateful a People, that our ſufferings are no perſecutions, becauſe we divide the Church for things indifferent, and ſtick at nothing but Liturgie, or Forms of Prayer, and Ceremonies, and that we hold Rebellious and Seditious Principles; or at beſt, have ſuch humours, fooliſh ſcruples and ſingularities, as render us fitter for the Common Goal, than the Church. Shall our ſilence contribute ſtill to their deceit, and to the quieting of Mens Conſciences in all that is done againſt us, as if it were good ſervice to God and the King? Shall we have no pity on Mens guilty Souls?

II. On the other ſide, we have long by ſad experience ſeen, that the miſunderſtanding of the Caſe, and perhaps partly of ſome of our judgments, hath led many of the People who are againſt Conformity, to over-run moderation, and the truth, and to run into unſound opinions and ſingularities, and to lay heavier charges on the Liturgy, and the Pariſh Churches, than there is cauſe for: And having once *over-run us*, they expect that *we* ſhould *follow them*, and be *ruled by them*; and if we do not, are ready to cenſure us as guilty of ſinful Compliance and Conformity: It greatly concerneth us therefore, to keep ſome from ſuch miſtakes, to rectifie others, to vindicate our ſelves, and clear our Conſciences, that we tell Men *what our Non-conformity is not*, if we may not tell them what it is?

I. Our Non-conformity is not in holding that the Scrip-

Scriptures are a *particular* Rule or Determination of all the Circumſtances of Church-Government and Worſhip, (as Time, Place, Utenſils, Words, Methods, Metres, Tunes, Diviſion of the Text into Chapters and Verſes, Tranſlations, helps by Notes, Written or Printed, Geſtures, Habits, *&c.*) But Nature and Scripture give us ſufficient General Rules or Laws for all ſuch; as that they be done in *Unity*, *Charity*, to *edification*, *decently* and *orderly*, *&c.* which muſt be obſerved.

II. We hold, that when ſuch *undetermined Circumſtances* are *lawfully determined* by *true Authority*, yea were it but by the *Conſent* and *Cuſtom* of the Churches of Chriſt, or the preſent *Conduct of their Paſtors*, the Aſſembly ſhould yield Conformable Obedience, and avoid unneceſſary Singularities.

III. We hold, that if thoſe, to whom ſuch Determinations belong, ſhould miſtake, and not do it in the beſt and profitableſt manner; yet ordinarily it is the Peoples duty to obey and hold Communion with that Church, ſo be it that nothing *ſinful be commanded them to do*, and the errour of the Determination be not ſuch as *overthroweth the Worſhip* or *End it ſelf*: Of which we have elſewhere fullier opened our ſenſe (*In our judgment of things Indifferent.*)

IV. We are againſt no Biſhops or Church-Government of Gods appointment: We all are for an *Epiſcopus Gregis*; and where there are many Chappels and Curates in a Pariſh, we are far from perſwading them to deny ſuch ſubmiſſion to the chief Paſtor, as the Law requireth, and as God himſelf alloweth: Were *Ignatius* his *Epiſcopacy* among us, who tells us this, as the Note of the Churches Unity, that [*to every Church there is one Altar, and one Biſhop with his fellow Presbyters and Deacons*]

tons] we ſhould be far from perſwading any to ſeparate from it: Yea were it *Cyprian's Meaſure of Epiſcopacy.* Yea, there are *ſome among us* who have long profeſſed themſelves uncertain, whether ſuch a large Epiſcopacy, as is but the ſame with the *ordinary part* of the Church-power of the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts, be not *jure divino*, ſuch as ſhould be ſtill continued; becauſe, 1. When Chriſt hath once ſetled a Form or Order of Government, a change muſt not be charged on him raſhly, and without proof; eſpecially as made ſo ſuddenly: If the Affirmer prove the ſettlement, the Denyer muſt prove the *Change* and Revocation. 2. Becauſe Chriſt promiſed to be with them to the end of the World, *Mat.* 28. 20. when he appointed them this univerſal, or indefinite Work. 3. Becauſe many others, as well as Apoſtles, had larger Circuits than particular Churches for their Work, (as *Silas*, *Silvanus*, *Apollo*, *Titus*, and many more:) And at their Reformation the *Scots Viſitors* ſeemed ſuch. That Men of extraordinary worth and gravity may Plant many Churches, and take the care of many, directing, exhorting, and admoniſhing the Paſtors, or particular Biſhops, not depriving thoſe Paſtors and Churches of the Power and Priviledges granted them in Scripture, ſome of us do not deny. Government by the Word is an ordinary continuing Ordinance of God: But the Apoſtles *extraordinary* Work and Office (to be Eye-witneſſes and Embaſſadours immediately ſent, and endued with the extraordinary Meaſures of the Spirit) theſe we believe they have no Succeſſors in, becauſe they were but for a time.

And thoſe of us that cannot grant *ſo much*, as is aforeſaid, and all of us as to an *Epiſcopacy* which we think contrary to God's Word, can yet ſubmit to much which

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we dare not *approve of*; and as we take our ſelves bound to obey all by what Names or Titles ſoever diſtinguiſhed or dignified, who, *circa ſacra*, as Officers of the King, do exerciſe any part of that Power of the Sword, by his Commiſſion, which we acknowledge in the Oath of Supremacy; ſo if any uſurp more Power of the Keys than Chriſt alloweth them, we are not thereby diſobliged from living peaceably in our places, nor allowed to *raiſe* Sedition, or uſe any unlawful means to reform it; though we cannot make a Vow and Covenant never to do any lawful thing, to alter and amend it.

Much leſs is it true which Men of hard Faces have ſometimes ſaid, that we are *againſt Biſhops, becauſe we cannot be Biſhops our ſelves*. And they that tell Men that every Presbyter would be a Pariſh Pope, do ſure think they ſpeak to Men ſo ſilly as to be mockt by an undiſcerned Contradiction: A Pope is the Univerſal Monarch of the *Chriſtian world*, (or all:) Is a *Pariſh* all the World? A Dioceſan is the Sole Biſhop with us of a *Multitude* of Churches. Is a Pariſh a *Multitude* of ſuch Churches? If a Man be againſt one Schoolmaſter only over a thouſand Schools, ſhall he be reproached becauſe he is willing to *teach one*? Is a *King in each Kingdom* as unreaſonable a thing as a Papal Monarch, or a King of Kings, and of all the Earth? If it be to the gain of Souls that we are deprived of this Parochial Epiſcopacy, we can eaſily bear it; profeſſing that we hold it far eaſier to be Governed, than to Govern.

V. We judge not all *Officers, circa ſacra*, unlawful which are made by Man: As ſome *Circumſtances* are not particularly determined in Scripture, but left to Men, ſo are many of the *Officers* that muſt execute them. If the King appoint *Church-Magiſtrates* to keep Peace and

Order, to call Synods, and take ſuch cogniſance of Cauſes as belongs *to him*, or do any part of *his work*, as is afore ſaid, we will obey them: And ſo of Church-Wardens, Door-keepers, Sextons, and ſuch others, as ſome Churches of old made uſe of, ſo be it they uſurp not any part of the Office which Chriſt hath appropriated to the Paſtors of the Churches.

VI. We are not for *Lay-mens claim* or *exerciſe* of the *Power of the Keys*, whether they be *Lay-Chancellors*, or *Magiſtrates*, or *Lay-Officers*, or *People*: But we hold that the *Keys of Chriſts Church*, that is, the *Power of receiving in by Baptiſm*, and of *Guiding* the People by holy *Doctrine*, and in *holy Worſhip*, and of *Excommunicating* and *Abſolving*, are by Chriſt committed to the Paſtors of the Churches. Though there is alſo an admoniſhing Power in Magiſtrates, and divers ſorts of Penalties, for ſins againſt God, which they may inflict. And the voluntary *execution* of the Paſtors judgment, by holding or not holding Communion with others, is the Peoples part; in which, as *reaſonable*, they have a diſcerning judgment.

VII. As to the caſe of *Elders*, we all hold that none ſhould be *proper Church Governours*, by the ſaid Keys, which are meerly *Lay-men*, and not *Church Officers*: And many of us hold that neither Chriſt nor his Apoſtles ever appointed any Elders to Rule the Church, by the power of the Keys (diſtinct from the Magiſtrates Government by the Sword,) but only *ordained Miniſters* of Chriſt, who have alſo *authority* to *preach* and *adminiſter both the Sacraments*. However, we know that when many of theſe belonged to one Congregation, one that was the Chief Speaker (uſually the Biſhop) was wont to preach, and the reſt to be his Aſſiſtants, eſpeci-

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ally in private Care of Souls; and those of us that think otherwise, that Christ or his Apostles made such a Church Office as *Ruling Elders not-ordained*, or that have *no power of preaching or administring Sacraments*, do not hold such essential to the Church, nor refuse to live in love and peace and Communion with the Churches that have no such Elders. And we all think that so small a difference should make no greater a breach among us.

VIII. We are against the Excommunicating of Kings, and of other Magistrates, on whose Honour the well-governing and peace of the Kingdom doth depend, (and are sorry to find some of our sharp Accusers of another mind:) Our Reasons are, because the *dishonouring* of them is forbidden in the *Fifth Commandment*: And *Positive Institutions*, *cæteris paribus*, must give place to *Moral Natural Laws*: *Rituals* and matters of *Order* are no Duties, when they make against those *Grand Duties* which are their *Ends*, or those that are of fundamental or greater use. And this Christ hath often taught us, by sending the contrary minded to learn what this meaneth [*I will have mercy and not sacrifice*,] and bidding the unreconciled *leave their Gift at the Altar*, *&c.* The *End* is to be preferred before the *Means*, which indeed are *no Means* when *against the End*. And *Church-Order* is not to be pretended for *disordering and confounding Kingdoms*, or against the *publick good and safety*. We judge that Bishop *Bilson*, Bishop *Andrews*, and such others, have truly heretofore determined, that some wicked impenitent Princes may be *denyed the Sacrament*, but not *defamed or dishonoured* by a *Sentence of Excommunication*: Much less by any *Foreign Usurper*, or any *Minister at home*. That the Prince himself doth not by consent make the Guid of his Soul; for no other but he that is called

to

to *give him the Sacrament* if qualified, is the *denyer of it* if he be *unqualified*; unleſs as he is to do what he doth, by the advice and conſent of Fellow Paſtors.

But the very uſe of *Excommunication* is to puniſh and reform men by *diſhonouring and ſhaming them*; therefore it is not to be uſed, where we owe ſuch *honour* by the *Fifth Commandment*, to our Prince.

Obj. 1. *We are bid alſo to honour Father and Mother*; 2. *Yea to honour all men.*

Anſw. 1. We dare not juſtifie any Paſtors publick diſgraceful excommunicating his own Father or Mother, unleſs where a publick obligation for publick good requireth it. 2. But to both inſtances, we ſay that a greater *end* and more *publick good* is to be preferred to a *leſs*: And when a *private mans* honour is forfeited, we cannot give him that which he hath caſt away, and God will penally take away till he repent. But when the *publick order* and welfare (which is above all perſonal good) obligeth us to honour Magiſtrates, a ſubordinate Law will not ſuſpend it. Publick Excommunication is an Act of Government, to be exerciſed on the Governed for the Ends of Government. But for a Prelate or Prieſt, or any other, to do this on his Governours (though of another rank) croſſeth the Ends of Government: Nor are Subjects ſo to be tempted to contemn their Rulers, leſt they come to think, as *Bellarmine* and ſuch Papiſts, that Infidels are not to Govern Chriſtians, nor to be tolerated in their Government; or as their very Religion teacheth them, *Concil. Later. c.* 3. *ſub Innoc.* 3. that when Princes are excommunicated, they may be depoſed by the Pope; or as their learnedeſt Doctors ſay, that they *are no Kings*, and to *kill them* is *not to kill the King*: See the Teſtimonies of this cited at large, and expreſly, by *H. Fowlis* in his Book of Popiſh Treaſons.

If

If ever any Proteſtants Epiſcopal, Presbyterian, or Independents, were or be of another mind, (for the Excommunicating of Kings or Chief Rulers) that's nothing to us, who ſhall neither live nor dye by the Faith or Opinion of others: But we ſhould ſo much the rather here diſown it.

IX. It is none of our judgment, that when men are excommunicated (by Pope, Prelates, Presbyters, or People, who are the four Pretenders to that Power) the Magiſtrate muſt be their *Lictor* or *Executioner*, or muſt further puniſh men by the *Sword*, meerly, *eo nomine*, becauſe they are *excommunicate*, or becauſe they reconcile not themſelves to the Church, by penitence and obedience; or becauſe the Pope, or Prelate, or Prieſts, deliver up the excommunicate to him to be puniſhed, or threaten him if he will not do it. The Civil Ruler may puniſh the *ſame men* for the *ſame Crimes*, but upon their *own exploration* and *judgment* of the Cauſe, and not as meer Hangmen that muſt needs execute the judgment of other Judges. Their own *Conſcience* muſt be ſatisfied, and they muſt know what they do, and why; elſe to how many baſe and bloody offices the factious worldly Clergy may oblige them, the Papal Kingdom hath long given men too ſad a proof.

And we muſt profeſs, that we are fully perſwaded, that we have good Reaſon to conclude, that ſo *near a Proſecution* by the Civil Power, as is the *impriſoning* and *undoing* of Perſons Excommunicate, meerly becauſe they ſtand Excommunicate, and are not abſolved as Penitents, hath not a few nor ſmall incommodities Eccleſiaſtical. 1. So great a Dominion in the Clergy hath done much to corrupt the Sacred Office, and make men (naturally proud) unmeet for the humble Services of the Goſpel.

Goſpel. 2. And it breedeth in the People a diſtaſt and hatred of the Clergy, as if they were the grievous Wolves that devour the Flock in Sheeps Cloathing, and bear not *Grapes and Figs*, but wear *Thorns and Thiſtles* to *prick and hurt* them; and cauſeth their Exhortations to be the more unſucceſsful. 3. It ſeemeth to diſhonour the Diſcipline inſtituted by Chriſt, as if the Keys of his Church were of no more ſignification, than the Crown of Thorns and Reed with which he was derided, and could do nothing without the Princes Sword. 4. It contradicteth the experience of above 300 years, when Church Diſcipline was exerciſed more effectually than it is now, and that not only without the Sword of the Magiſtrate, but alſo againſt his will and oppoſition: Yea, it was many a hundred years more, after Emperours were Chriſtian, before the Keys were ever thus ſeconded by the Sword; and had not the Donatiſts, by inhumane aſſaulting the Orthodox, provoked the Churches and Magiſtrates, it had been like to have been long before the Sword had been drawn againſt Hereticks at all. 5. And that which much moveth us is, that it greatly fruſtrateth the uſe of the Keys, or Church Diſcipline, by obſcuring the uſe and efficacy of them: For who can tell whether they do any thing or nothing to that mans ſeeming Repentance, who muſt lye in Goal and be undone, unleſs he will ſay that he repenteth? Though the Church muſt take up with outward Profeſſions, as not knowing the heart, yet muſt they be voluntary and credible Profeſſions. 6. And thus how unavoidably muſt the Church be corrupted, when its Communicants are ſuch as chuſe rather to be in the Church than in the Goal, and all thoſe are thought worthy of its Priviledges, who had rather ſay [*we repent*] than be made Beggars: Whenas in the ancient Churches none

none had its Communion that did not desire it, and beg for it, though it cost them dear in the world. 7. And thus Christs great and precious Gifts seem exposed to contempt, while they are forced upon the Refusers by ways of violence. If the Church be made a Prison, and men be *driven* into it and lockt up, the *Place* will hardly prove them Christians. 8. And we fear it will misrepresent Christs Laws and Covenant-terms to the world, while Christ saith, that none can be his Disciples that do not (by consent and resolution) take up the Cross, and forsake all, and follow him, in hope of a reward in Heaven, (*Luke* 14. 26. 29, 30. 33, 34.) And this course seemeth to tell men, that if they had but rather be in the Church, than among Rogues and Beggars in the Goal, they shall have Christ, pardon, and life eternal, given and sealed up to them particularly in the holy Sacrament. As if Christ were the Cross-maker, and the Cross to be born by his Enemies only, and not *Christ* but *sin* were served by forsaking temporal felicity. 9. And we fear lest it tend to *deceive mens Souls*, by giving them all the sealed Grant of forgiveness and salvation, who can but rather endure to take the Sacrament, and say I repent, than be undone.

We doubt not but there is a time for just punishment of sinners: But we read not, that Christ sent men to preach *Repentance* by any such motives, nor to offer his Blood and Mercy on terms so low, nor to any but desirous Volunteers: And with what confidence or comfort can a Minister deliver the Sacrament to such?

All which considered, we are so far from desiring to subdue Kings and Rulers to be the Executioners of the Clergy, and the Servants of their worldly Interest, Pride, or Passions, that we heartily wish that Church Discipline

might be left to operate alone, *& valeat quantum valere poteſt*, and that Church Priviledges might be given to none but deſirers, and voluntary accepters, and none might be *cram'd* or *drencht* with the *Body and Blood* of *Chriſt*, but all earneſtly invited, and by loving importunity compelled to come in: And that Magiſtrates may judge and puniſh Vice, in their proper Court, and proper way.

X. We hold it not unlawful to take Oaths, and make Covenants, Subſcriptions, or Declarations of things lawful, when Authority commandeth us; yea, we hold Oaths of Fidelity to the Soveraign to be needful; and are the loather to ſwear Allegiance to any inferior Officers, or to *ſwear never to endeavour any alteration of them*, leſt we ſeem to make them equally neceſſary and fixed as the King; and to give them any of his Prerogatives, when they are his Officers, whom he hath power to alter.

XI. We readily ſubſcribe the Doctrine of Faith and Sacraments contained in the 39 Articles, and differ not therein from the Church of *England*, that we know of. Though our Religion is only (objectively) Gods Word, (as to the Eſſentials, the Sacramental Covenant, expounded in the Creed, the Lords Prayer and Decalogue, and integrally the ſacred Scriptures,) and therefore if there be any fault in the 39 Articles, it is no fault in our Religion, (which is confeſſed to be all true by Papiſts themſelves;) yet as our Writings, and Sermons, and Speeches, are the expreſſions of our *ſubjective Religion*, ſo the *Confeſſions* of Churches are *eminently ſuch*; being uſeful to ſatisfie other Churches of our ſincerity, and to regulate or limit the Teachers, that by weakneſs or errour are apt to deliver their miſtakes, or to oppoſe the Truth.

Truth. And though there be ſome expreſſions in the Articles, the Liturgy, yea in the Creed called *Athanaſius's*, which we think not accurate, but lyable to an ill interpretation, yet when our Conſciences tell us that it was truth which was intended, and words are not *natural, immutable*, but *arbitrary ſigns* of the Speakers mind, we are far from affecting to be peeviſhly or unreaſonably quarrelſome or ſcrupulous, but are willing to overlook infirmity and unfitneſs of expreſſion, when we ſee that we are not to own Untruths.

XII. We much approve of the Method of the Church Catechiſm, as it firſt openeth the Eſſentials of Chriſtianity in the Baptiſmal Covenant, and then the Expoſition of it in the Creed, Decalogue, and Lords Prayer, and then the uſe of the confirming Sacrament the Lords Supper: Though we are perſwaded, that it needeth more explication and ſome correction.

XIII. We are taught by Chriſt and his Apoſtles uſing of the Septuagint, that it is lawful, when the Peoples uſage and acquaintance with it doth render it moſt edifying to them, to uſe a defective faulty Tranſlation of Gods own Word, and to call this Gods Word, as long as it ſufficently expreſſeth the Doctrine, which is the matter and main ſenſe. And that we may hold Communion with Churches that publickly and privately uſe ſuch Tranſlations, and that have many other faults in their Doctrine, Diſcipline, and Worſhip; though we cannot juſtifie the leaſt of them, by our profeſſed Aſſent and Conſent, nor make a Covenant that we will never endeavour to alter or amend them. We are apt enough to let ſin alone, and not to amend any thing amiſs in our ſelves and others, ſo far as ſin remaineth in us (it being a ſelf-defending evil,) and therefore are unwilling to adde to our

badneſs, nor do we need a Law to bind us never to repent or amend, or never to help others in ſuch a caſe to do it.

XIV. We have in a peculiar Explication of our judgment, not only diſclaimed, but ſufficiently depreſſed, that unruly Opinion falſly charged on us by ſome, *viz.* [*That Things Lawful or Indifferent become Unlawful when commanded by Lawful Authority.*] Though we hold it unlawful to encourage and ſtrengthen Traytors and Uſurpers againſt Chriſt or the King, by voluntary Swearing or performing ſuch Obedience to them, even in *licitis & honeſtis*, as ſeemeth to own their Uſurpation.

XV. How far we think the Magiſtrates Laws bind us to things Scandalous, or Evil and Hurtful by Accident, yea by the Weakneſs of others, we are prepared to open in a diſtinct Profeſſion by it ſelf.

XVI. We are far from condemning all *Forms of Prayer*, and *Publick Liturgies*, as unlawful, (of which we have His Majeſties Teſtimony, in his Declaration about Eccleſiaſtical Affairs;) much more are we far from condemning all the ancient and preſent Churches of Chriſt that have uſed ſuch, or yet uſe them, throughout the Chriſtian world: And yet farther are we from *ſeparating* from them on that account, (for uſing Liturgies,) and from encouraging ſuch a Separation. Yea we commonly uſe a *ſtinted Liturgie our ſelves*, at leaſt the *Pſalms read and ſung*; and we hold it lawful to uſe ſuch as are *invented by men*, that are no Prophets; ſeeing we are commanded to uſe *Pſalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs*, (which confineth us not only to Scripture words;) and all men have not the skill to make *Hymns ex tempore*; much leſs would all the Aſſembly, *ex tempore*, break forth into the ſame words: Therefore thoſe that are uſed by all,

muſt

must be *invented by some*: And Ministers with us do ordinarily impose their own invented words on all the Congregation, who must follow them; as our *Metres* and *Tunes* of *Psalms* are imposed.

XVII. We think it not unlawful to use as much of the English Liturgy, as we consented to use, when by his Majesties Commission some of us treated about the reformation, or alteration of it; *viz.* in such Assemblies where the Peoples incapacity maketh not such use of it more hurtful than helpful to their edification, and the comly concordant worshipping of God: Much less do we think it unlawful for our selves, or the People, in this case to join in the reverent and serious use of it with others. We find that even the old Non-conformists (such as *Cartwright*, *Hildersham*, *Knewstube*, Dr. *Jo. Reignolds*, *Bradshaw*, *Paget*, *Ball*, *&c.*) petitioned for a Reformation, but not an Abolition of it, and wrote and preached against separating *from it*, or *for it*, from the *Churches* that used it; and many of them not only used much or most of it themselves, but also perswaded to the use of it, and answered largely the Separatists Arguments against such use. And we join with Mr. *Ball*, and other of them, in thanking God that *England* hath a more reformed Liturgy, than most of the Churches in the World; and we would not seem to use it when we do not, but do it (as aforesaid) in the serious devotion and fervour of our Souls: Nor would we peevishly make any thing in it worse than it is, but would put the best construction on each part of it, that true Reason will justifie or allow.

XVIII. We are far from judging the Parish Ministers to be no true Ministers of Christ, or the Parish Churches no true Churches, or judging it unlawful to hold Communion with them: But if there be any called Ministers

niſters or Prieſts, of theſe following ſorts, we take them for no true Miniſters of Chriſt, *viz.* 1. If by *inſufficiency* they are uncapable of Teaching the *neceſſary parts of Chriſtianity*, and Guiding the Church accordingly in the Publick Worſhip of God. 2. If they are *Hereticks*, denying any of theſe *eſſential* parts. 3. If they are *malignant Oppoſers* of the *practice* of them: And in a word, If they are ſuch, through incapacity, as are like to do more harm than good.

XIX. In ſeveral Cuſtoms (freely, not by conſtraint,) uſed in many ancient Churches, and in ſeveral practices of ſeveral Churches of theſe Times, we find that which we would not by *Oaths, or Subſcriptions, or Covenants*, approve, but wiſh they were reformed, and that they had never been uſed; when yet we do not for ſuch things diſhonour and reproach ſuch Churches, nor inveigh againſt them in our preaching to diminiſh their due eſteem; much leſs diſclaim them as no Churches of Chriſt; but love, and honour them; and live peaceably under many faults which we cannot reform in the places where we live: So be it no ſin be put upon our ſelves, we can hold Communion with thoſe that have divers ſins, or faults, in their Miniſtrations; not as with *their ſin*, but *with their Church in worſhip, notwithſtanding the ſin*, ſo it corrupt not God's worſhip ſo far as that he himſelf rejecteth it: For no Man is ſinleſs in his beſt performance.

XX. Though the Paſtors hold any *tolerable errors perſonally*, and though ſuch are uſually uttered in their *Miniſtration*, and though they be inſerted in their *Liturgies*, ſo that we may expect to *hear* them; yea, uttered as in that *Churches name*; we hold not all this ſufficient cauſe to warrant our ſeparation from that Church: For all Churches conſiſt of Men, and all Men are faulty and imperfect;

perfect; and ſuch as the Men are, ſuch we may expect their works ſhould be, notwithſtanding the Divine aſſiſtance: And to ſeparare from all faulty Churches and Worſhip, is to ſeparate from all the World; and allow all the World to ſeparate from us.

XXI. If a true Church deny us Communion, unleſs we will commit ſome ſin, or omit ſome neceſſary duty; though we cannot be *locally preſent* in ſuch caſes, nor approve what they ſo do, yet we ſhall not therefore renounce them *as no Churches*; but lamenting their ſin, and their denying us their Communion on juſt Terms, we ſhall continue the Union and Communion of *Faith and Love*, and be *preſent in ſpirit*, though *corporally abſent*, deſiring a part in their Prayers, and owning all that God diſowneth not.

XXII. We hold that no Chriſtians muſt be disjoyned, or ſeparated in any of the ſeven Points of Union required by the Holy Ghoſt, *Eph.* 4. 3, 4, 5, 6. 1. *One Body*, (the Catholick Church headed by Chriſt:) 2. *One Spirit*, (the Holy Ghoſt:) 3. *One Hope of our Calling*, (*Remiſſion*, *Adoption*, and the Heavenly Glory:) 4. *One Lord* (Jeſus Chriſt:) 5. *One Faith*, (the Eſſentials of Chriſtianity believed:) 6. *One Baptiſme*, (or Baptiſmal Covenant with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt:) 7. *One God* and Father of all, *who is above all, and through all, and in us all*; of whom, and to whom, and through whom are all things.

XXIII. Though we are not ſatisfied of the lawfulneſs of uſing the tranſient Image of the Croſs, as a *Dedicating Sign* and *Symbol* of *Chriſtianity*, ſo much Sacramental (much leſs to refuſe from Baptiſm and Chriſtendom all Chriſtians Infants, unleſs they will have them ſo croſſed, no more than if a Crucifix were ſo impoſed and uſed:)

uſed:) yet do we not condemn *all uſe* of either Croſs, or Crucifix: Nor do we preſume cenſoriouſly to reproach and diſhonour the ancient Chriſtians, who, living among Pagans that derided Chriſt Crucified, did ſhew them, by oft uſing this ſign, that they were not aſhamed of the Croſs: And though we find that they uſed more Rites and ſignificant deviſed Signs and Ceremonies, than we think they ſhould have done, yet we judge it our Duty to love and honour their Memorial: Nor do we take all Rites to be ſinful that are ſignificant.

XXIV. We hold not all the uſe of Images, even the Images of holy Perſons, to be unlawful: Hiſtorical and memorative uſe we commonly allow, as the *Engliſh Geneva* Bible ſheweth by many Pictures: We condemn not them that have Scripture Perſons and Hiſtory Painted on their Walls, or on the very Bricks that adorn their Chimnies; nor that uſe a Skelleton or Deaths-head; or that by theſe are minded of Mortality or the Life to come, and ſo make a *holy uſe* of them, (as good Men ſhould do of all lawful things; which therefore are *pure and ſanctified* to them.)

XXV. We hold not a Gown, or other meer diſtinctive Garment for Miniſters, to be unlawful, in which, ſaith the Canon, *no holineſs is placed*; any more than to Judges, Lawyers, or Phyloſophers. And ſome of us hold a Surplice rather to be uſed, than the Miniſtry forſaken: And thoſe that think otherwiſe, think not the matter of ſo much weight, as to alienate them from Love or Communion with thoſe that uſe it: For we pretend not to ſo much perfection, as to be all juſt of a mind and meaſure of Knowledge in all things, of no greater importance than this: Nor would we ſilence faithful Miniſters for a Surplice.

XXVI. Though

XXVI. Though we greatly diſlike the common uſe of *God-Fathers*, as they undertake that, as *Sole-premiſers* for the Child, which they never ſignifie credibly the leaſt purpoſe to perform, and the Parents are excluded from entering their own Children into Covenant with God, and muſt not ſpeak one covenanting or promiſing word; no, nor be urged to be preſent, *&c.* Yet we refuſe not the uſe of ſuch *Sureties* or *Sponſors* in Baptiſme, as are but *Seconds* to the Parents and only atteſt the Parents credibility, and undertake to take care of the Childrens Education, in caſe the Parents either *apoſtatize* or *dye*; nor yet ſuch as are *Adopters* of the Children, and take them to them as their own, and ſo have the right of diſpoſing of them, and covenanting in their names and ſtead. Though yet we conform not to the denying of Chriſtendom to the Children of all godly Parents, that either cannot get ſuch God-Fathers, or will not, but offer to enter their own Children into that Covenant.

XXVII. Many of us hold it lawful to communicate Kneeling, in the reception of the Sacramental Body and Blood of Chriſt: And thoſe of us that think ſo, and thoſe of us that think otherwiſe, take it not for ſuch a matter as ſhould hinder Chriſtian Love, Concord, Unity, and Peace; or allow Men to deſpiſe, condemn, or excommunicate one another: But all deteſt that cruelty that dare caſt out the worthy Members of Chriſt and his Church from Communion, for their difference in that geſture.

XXVIII. We all hold that God muſt be orderly and decently worſhipped with the Body, as well as ſpiritually with the Mind: And that reverent geſtures and behaviour are fit, not only to *expreſs mental reverence* to God, but alſo to *excite it* in our ſelves and others. And that

ſuch ſlovenly, rude, and undecent behaviour, as ſeemeth to ſignifie *prophaneneſs and contempt*, or to tempt others thereto, is no ſmall ſin, whatever men intend by it.

XXIX. We all hold that *Preaching*, *Prayer*, or *Sacraments*, ſhould not be made *ridiculous* or *contemptible*, by the Miniſters incongruous, light, or otherwiſe unmeet and uncomly words; nor by tautologies, and ſuch an unmeet ſtile as tendeth to diſaffect the Hearers: (Though that Curioſity, which conſiſteth in pedantick, light, and frothy Speech, unſuitable to the Hearers edification, we diſlike.) And O that God would raiſe up enow ſuch for his Service, in the Church and World, as are able to expreſs true wiſdom, holineſs, and zeal, in words beſeeming the moſt Holy Majeſty, and the holy Things of which they ſpeak. But yet we judge that various Auditories ſhould have various Stiles, though none but clear, and ſpiritual, and ſerious: As a labouring poor man will chuſe a great piece of Brown Bread, before a little piece of Manchet, when idle tender Perſons will chuſe otherwiſe.

XXX. We are ſo far from holding it unlawful to uſe the Creed, and Commandments, and Lords Prayer, as ſome accuſe us, that we take them to be the Summaries of the Chriſtian Religion, as to matter of *Belief*, *Deſire*, and *Worſhip*; which the Church ſhould uſe and profeſs accordingly, and ſhould never be forgtoten.

XXXI. We are ſo far from being againſt Catechizing, as ſome have accuſed us, as that we take it to be a moſt needful thing, and no ſmall part of that work which both Miniſters and Parents ſhould perform.

XXXII. We are far from oppoſing that ſort of Confirmation, which conſiſteth in the ſolemn tranſition of Perſons

Perſons out of the ſtate of Infant Communion into that of the Adult, by their ſolemn intelligent owning that Covenant with God, which they entred into by others in their Infancy. The Reaſons of which more than one of us have long ago publickly given to the World, (Mr. *Hanmer*, Mr. *Baxter.*) And the want of which we conceive is a great cauſe of the pollution of the Church, and of the increaſe of Anabaptiſts, who are ſcandalized at the omiſſion of it, and the turning it into a Ceremony or Formality.

XXXIII. We hold it a Duty for all Miniſters in their Adminiſtrations of Baptiſm, the Lords Supper, Abſolution, and in their Speeches of the dead at Burials, to go as far in *charitable hopeful expreſſions, as Reaſon will allow*; and to ſpeak and judge of men according to their own *intelligent Profeſſions*, not rendred incredible by proved contrary Expreſſions, or notorious contrariety of Practice, as being no ſearchers of mens hearts our ſelves: And where Diſcipline is truly exerciſed, ſuch words are meet, as otherwiſe are not tolerable. So that if we conform not to the Liturgy in our Adminiſtration of any of theſe Ordinances of Chriſt, and if we dare not pronounce of all the open Atheiſts, Infidels, Hereticks, Schiſmaticks, Rebels, Perjured, Murderers, Thieves, Adulterers, Drunkards, *&c.* who made not away themſelves, and were not unbaptized or excommunicate, that [*God of his great mercy hath taken to himſelf the Souls of theſe dear Brethren,*] nor give thanks for [*delivering them out of the miſeries of this ſinful World,*] nor pray to reſt in Chriſt [*as our hope is this our Brother doth,*] *&c.* it is not becauſe we deny any of this before granted, but becauſe we dare not renounce the Goſpel, that ſaith, [*He that believeth not ſhall be damned,*] and [*without holineſs*

none ſhall ſee God,] and [*Except ye repent ye ſhall all periſh*;] and becauſe we are loath to preach to men all our lives, that which we ſhall contradict at mens burial, and tempt the ungodly to preſumption and damnation.

XXXIV. Many of us hold it lawful to keep Anniverſary Days of Thankſgiving, in commemoration of the great Mercies of God to his Church, by the Holy Doctrine, Labour, Miracles, Lives, and Sufferings of the Apoſtles, and moſt famous promoters of the Faith; ſo that Superſtition and prohibited Creature-worſhip be ſufficiently avoided. And thoſe of us that ſcruple ſuch Days of mans Inſtitution, yet take not this for any other than a tolerable difference among us.

XXXV. We are not againſt ſuch ſort of reading the found parts of the Apocrypha, as we may do by other good Books, ſufficiently diſtinguiſhed from other Scriptures, and uſed in due time and place; though we conform not ſo far as to declare our Aſſent and Conſent to the *uſe of the Calendar, Preſcript,* or *Directory,* which requireth them to be read in the Mornings, from *Septemb.* 27. and 28. till *Novemb.* 24. even *Bell* and the *Dragon*, *Suſanna*, *Tobit*, when as the Vulgar underſtand not the word *Apocrypha* ſufficiently, to diſtinguiſh them from the ſacred Scriptures, when they are equally called the *Leſſons*, and read in the ſame order. And we are confirmed in this part of our Non-conformity by the Articles of Religion, which diſcard the Apocrypha, and by the Learned Treatiſe of the late Biſhop *Couſins*, who hath fully proved that the ancient Churches received not thoſe Books into the Canon, and by many Doctors of the Church of *England* that charge them with Untruths: Some of us have ſeen the Writing (as on good reaſon is ſuppoſed) of a preſent Learned worthy Biſhop, who

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ſheweth that the words of the Angel in *Tobit* are a Lye, who ſaid that [*he was the Son of* Ananie *of the Tribe of* Naphtali:] And that ſo is his ſaying, [*that the ſmoke of a Fiſhes heart will drive away all Devils, that they ſhall never return; when Chriſt tells us of ſome that go not out but by Prayer and Faſting.*]

XXXVI. We are far from deſigning any abaſement of the Clergy, nor do we deny, or draw others to deny, any due Reverence and Obedience to them. And though we know that the *bare Title and Office* will never preſerve ſufficient reſpect, for the honour of the Clergy, and the ſucceſs of their work, without competent qualifications and labours of the perſons; yet would we rather hide than open or reproach the faults of ſuch as are tolerable in that ſacred Office, and would do our beſt for their work ſake, to promote the eſteem even of thoſe that differ from us, and of ſome that perſecute us. We know that the People are exhorted, *to know thoſe that labour among them, and are over them in the Lord, and to eſteem them highly in love, for their work ſake*, 1 Theſſ. 5. 12, 13. *And to obey them that have the Rule* (or *Guidance*) *of them, and to ſubmit themſelves*, Heb. 13. 17. 24. *And that the Elders that Rule well are worthy of double honour, eſpecially they that labour in the Word and Doctrine*, 1 Tim. 5. 17. We that take it for our Duty to *honour all men*, and *ſubmit our ſelves to one another*, would not deny any *due honour* to any of the *Clergie* that have any pre-eminence, either in age, grace, gifts, or by the Magiſtrates appointment, as his Officers (as aforeſaid,) or any way given them by Chriſt: We take it not for a Priviledge to be from under Government.

XXXVII. Our Non-conformity conſiſteth not in denying a *National*, *Provincial*, or other *Church Form* of

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mans invention and inſtitution: On theſe Suppoſitions:

1. So it be preſuppoſed that there is ſomewhat of *Divine Inſtitution* predetermined by Chriſt and his Spirit in the Apoſtles, (that is, 1. That there be ſuch *Doctrine*, *Worſhip*, and *Diſcipline* as he hath commanded: 2. That there be ſuch Paſtors to exerciſe them, whoſe Office he hath deſcribed: 3. That there be ſuch ſtated Congregations or Societies in which they ſhall be uſed, even *Neighbour Chriſtians aſſociated for Perſonal Communion therein.* 4. That all theſe Churches enjoy the Priviledges granted them by Chriſt, and live in love, peace, and concord, and hold ſuch juſt correſpondence as is neceſſary thereto, and to the Common End and Good: All this is of Divine appointment.)

2. So that theſe *Divine Inſtitutions* be not violated by *Humane*, or by the power of man.

3. So that *Humane Churches* be not made *equal and co-ordinate* to the Divine, much leſs *ſuperior*, and *ſuper-ordinate*; as if they were to Chriſts inſtituted Churches, what a *Kingdom* is to a *City*, or a *Regiment* to a *Troop*, and Chriſts Churches were but *ſimilar parts* of the *Humane Churches*, that muſt rule them. But as the King is *Epiſcopus exterior*, or the Governour of the Churches ſo far as the Sword is to be uſed; ſo, *circa ſacra*, we have before ſaid, that he may make his own Officers, and conſequently Provinces for them, and Orders of their exerciſe: And the Churches in his Dominions may be ſo called *one National Church*, as he is the exterior Civil Governour of them all by the Sword, which indeed is but to be a Religious or Chriſtian Kingdom; as alſo, *ab accidente*, as theſe many Churches are under one Chriſtian (yea were he an Infidel) King; and as hereby they have the advantage of fraternal aſſociation and correſpondency

ſpondency for concord. But proper Denominations are from the Eſſential Form.

XXXVIII. It is no part of our Non-conformity to be againſt the due Uſe or Authority of Councils, or Synods of the Clergy. We hold, that when one is caſt out of *one* Church for a cauſe belonging to the *Cogniſance of many*, *many* may have occaſion to take Cogniſance of it: And the edification of each other, the ſatisfactory Debate of Difficulties, the preſervation of mutual Love, Peace, and Concord, may make Synods to be uſeful. But yet we hold that the major Vote of Biſhops in a Council are not thereby the *proper Governours* of the *minor diſſenting part*, nor of the *abſent Biſhops*; but that Councils are for *Counſel* and *Concord*, and not for *direct Regiment of each other*, (though *together* and *aſunder* the *Paſtors* are all *Governours of the Flock*.) And ſome of us have long ago publickly proved, that Councils were called *General* at firſt, but with reſpect to the Dominions or Empire of one Prince, and not as if they were *Univerſal* as to all the *Chriſtian World*; and that *abſolutely Univerſal Councils* never *were*, or *ought*, or *can*, or ever *will* be called; and that to pretend that a *Papal* or *Imperial* General Council is the Univerſal Law-giver of the World, and that they have a promiſe of Infallibility in what ever they determine, and that we receive our Faith in Chriſt upon their Infallibility given by him, (and ſo we muſt know that Chriſt maketh them Infallible before we can believe that he is Chriſt.) Theſe and ſuch other nonſenſe cheats which ſome are now agitating, are fit to delude none but the groſly ignorant, that are prepared for deceit.

XXXIX. Yet we deny not, but that God having firſt bound us to *Unity* and *Concord* as far as we can attain, (with loving forbearance in the reſt,) when a lawful Synod

nod or Council hath determined of a way of Concord, on lawful Terms, in matters under their Power, there is an Obligation on all the particular Members, to forbear breaking that Union, and violating thoſe lawful Terms of Concord: For where there is not a *Governing Law*, there may be an *Obliging Contract*, or *Conſent*.

And whereas even the Papiſts now uſually teach that even a Councils Decrees bind not the Churches, at leaſt thoſe that had no Delegates, till by actual reception they conſent, be it known to the World, that on theſe Terms the Non-conformiſts in *London* ſeem to have ſome excuſe, if it had been only *Indifferent things* that the late Convocation had impoſed on them: For when the Clergy met to chuſe Clarks for the Convocation for *London*, (~~at *Sion-Colledge*~~,) the major Vote choſe Mr. *Calamy* and Mr. *Baxter*, (whom the Biſhop of *London*, according to his Power, did reject;) ſo that the City of *London* neither hath, nor ever had one Clark of their own chuſing in this Convocation which altered the Liturgy; but the Dignitaries, and the two Clarks choſen by the exterior parts of the County, were the only Perſons hence accepted (that ever we heard of, or could learn:) And ſurely our after-conſent will hardly be alledged. And *London* is no inconſiderable part of *England*.

XL. We refuſe not the Renunciation of the ſolemn Vow and Covenant, as if we thought it bound us unto any diſloyalty, Sedition, or other ſin: For we are ready to profeſs, that it ſo obligeth no Man: It cannot make a Sin to be a Duty or no Sin, nor a Duty to our Superiours to be no Duty; nor diſoblige us from any part of our due Obedience to the King. Nay, we judge that we muſt not make our ſelves a Religion or Law by our own Vows, or bind our ſelves to any thing but what we

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are bound to antecedently by God; and ſo our Vows muſt be but ſecondary Obligations: And theſe being our own thoughts, we muſt needs hold accordingly, that this ſolemn Vow doth *bind us* to nothing, but what God doth bind us to antecedently himſelf; and what would be our Duty had we never taken it: And therefore ſhould we renounce this Vow, we ſhould ſtill take our ſelves bound by God himſelf to do all the good that in it was Vowed. Whether the Vow of a thing indifferent bind or not, we are not determining; but as we hold that no ſuch thing ſhould be Vowed, ſo we declare that it is none of our preſent caſe, as is aforeſaid.

XLI. We are ſo far from refuſing the *Oxford* Oath, or the Subſcription, upon any diſloyal or rebellious Principles, that we ſhall hereafter adjoin ſuch a Profeſſion of this Subject, as ſhall ſuffice with all Men of common humanity, and impartiality, to juſtifie our Principles of Loyalty, againſt Malice it ſelf.

And if yet Malice will go on to keep open our Diviſions, and keep us under Odium and unjuſt Suſpenſions, *Suspitions* and provoke men to forbid us to preach Chriſt's Goſpel, by talking of the *late Wars*, and charging all on the *Non-conformiſts*, we ſhall now only crave their juſt Anſwer to theſe few Queſtions following.

Q. 1. Are they willing that *ſo many* of the *Engliſh Non-conformiſts* ſhall have leave to preach Chriſt's Goſpel freely, as never had any hand in the Wars? If they will procure us this, we are confident that the reſt that medled with the Wars are ſo few, and ſo ſelf-denying, that they will thankfully accept of this liberty for their Brethren, though they be ſilenced, or baniſhed themſelves.

Q. 2. Was it for matter of War that near two Thousand Ministers were ejected, or silenced, 1662? or for something else? Was this the cause that Mr. *Martin* of *Weeden*, that lost an Arm in the King's Army and War, could not have a day abated him in the Common Goal at *Warwick*, when he preached as a Non-conformist? And many other Instances we may give.

Q. 3. Did ever any of us that now address our selves to you, go farther in our Principles than Bishop *Bilson* did, even in his excellent Book of *Christian subjection*? we detested all that went beyond him in his Doctrine of Resistance: Or did any of us ever go near so far as your famous *R. Hooker* in his *first* and his *eighth* Book of *Eccles. Politie*, (published long ago, and again by Bishop *Gauden*, and Dedicated to the King,) whose over Popular Principles one of us, long ago, at large confuted: And were *they silenced* for this?

Q. 4. We humbly crave them that remember, and knew the Persons, to bethink them, whether, 1. Most of of the Parliament, when the War began: 2. Most of the *Westminster* Assembly, when they met: 3. Most of the Earl of *Essex*'s Collonels, and chief Officers: 4. Most of the Lord Lieutenants of the Militia: 5. Most of the Parliaments Major Generals, in the Earl of *Essex*'s time: 6. Most of the Sea Captains, in the Earl of *Warwick*'s time: We say, Whether most of these (we think ten to one, and in some Instances twenty to one) were not Conformists? As sure as Archbishop *Abbots* was, and all the Bishops, save six, in his days; on whom Doctor *Heyling* layeth the cause of our Divisions. *Q.* 5. And

Q. 5. And is it juſt, that all the *Conformiſts* be therefore made odious, and all the Conformable Miniſters ſilenced for theſe Conformiſts ſakes, even ſuch as never had a hand in the buſineſs?

Q. 6. If the War had been raiſed only by Non-conformiſts, yet why ſhould a thouſand or 1400 Miniſters *now*, that were never proved guilty of any Wars, be ſilenced and ruined for other mens Actions; any more than the Conformiſts for the Archbiſhop of *York*'s, who was a Commander for the Parliament?

Q. 7. Why ſhould *no other penalty* ſerve in this caſe, but *ſilencing us*? to the loſs or hazard of the innocent people. Is ſilencing us *our ſuffering* moſt, or the *Peoples*? If half the Bakers, Brewers, and Country Farmers had been in thoſe Wars, is there no way to puniſh them, but to put down their Trade, and forbidding them to bring Proviſion to the Markets? Would not puniſhing the innocent, as Drunkards or Whoremongers are puniſhed, ſatisfie you? Nor any thing but keeping them from *preaching the Doctrine of Salvation*? And that when the Fire conſumed the Churches, and when in many Pariſhes the tenth part of the People have no Church to go to?

Q. 8. Do you think that the Devil and the Papiſts had rather we were ſilenced, or not? Are they pleaſed with well-doing, and with that which promoteth the Proteſtant intereſt, and mans ſalvation? And hath the Proteſtant Religion been ſecured and advantaged by our uſage?

 Q. 9. If

Q. 9. If it be that we *Preach worſe* than others, or *Preach Sedition*, or unſound Doctrine, why are not we *accuſed of it*, and judged upon proof? And why are we not ſuffered rather to *Preach publickly*, where witneſs may be had, than driven into *corners*, where Sedition or Hereſie may be hid by thoſe that Preach it?

Q. 10. If you ſay that *our preaching is needleſs*, Is not *your own then as needleſs*, if you preach the *ſame Goſpel*? And muſt you have ~~Lordſhips~~, great maintenance, reverence, honour, and obedience, for *needleſs preaching*? And when ſome Pariſhes have ten thouſand, ſome twenty thouſand, ſome thirty thouſand, ſome it is thought fourſcore thouſand Souls, when three thouſand cannot come to hear in the Church, why is Preaching any more needful to thoſe *three thouſand* than to *all the reſt*? or to *four perſons* in a *Village*, than to *thouſands* in *Cities*? When our Preaching and other Miniſtration *ceaſeth* to be *notoriouſly needful*, we profeſs our ſelves joyfully willing to ceaſe: Our *Fleſh* had rather have eaſe, and a gainfuller Trade of life, than ſpending-labour, with poverty, reviling, ſcorn, and impriſonments.

XLII. To conclude, As far as we are able to underſtand the moſt learned, ſober, judicious Conformiſts, by their own words to us, and their Writings, they differ not at all from us about the *matter it ſelf*, which we deny Conformity to, but confeſs it to be unlawful, (as to the hardeſt points of the impoſed Subſcriptions, Oaths, and Declarations, and Covenants;) but they only take the words in ſuch a ſenſe, in which we our ſelves could take them,

them, were we perſwaded that it were indeed the true meaning of them. And do they that are as much as we againſt that ſenſe which we diſown, and agree with us in the matter, deſerve liberty, honour, and preferment, for otherwiſe interpreting the words of the Law, which the Law-givers themſelves will not interpret? And doth our ſuppoſition that the Law-makers mean properly as they ſpeak, deſerve ſcorn, ſilencing, and Goals, from them that will not expound them to us? The righteous God will be Judge between us.

For inſtance, 1. By [*Aſſent*] in the Declaration required, we underſtand [*Believing it to be true.*] But the Conformiſts that we ſpeak of, underſtand only [*a Belief that I may uſe it.*]

2. By [*all and every thing contained in the Book*] we ſuppoſe is meant [*all and every thing indeed:*] But they ſay, only *the Forms to be uſed are meant*, and many other things in the Book not meant.

We find after named [*Unfeigned Aſſent and Conſent unto, and Approbation of the ſaid Book, and to the uſe of all the Prayers, Rites, and Ceremonies, Forms and Orders therein contained and preſcribed,*] we think here *Approbation and Aſſent* are more than *Conſent to uſe*; and we think that the *uſe of all the Orders* is more than the *uſe of the Forms*: We think that *no word* in the Book was intended to be *uſeleſs*, and that the *Doctrines, Calendars*, (even that *untrue* one to find out *Eaſter-day*) *Rubricks*, and *Directories*, have each their proper uſe. We ſuppoſe that the foregoing words of *the Uſe*, are *the End*, and the Form of the Declaration is the

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Means to ſecure that *Uſe is the End*, and that the *Means* hath more in it than the *End*.

3. Some of them ſuppoſe, that denying Chriſtendom to Chriſtians Children, for want of Croſſing, or Godfathers, and denying Communion to true Chriſtians that receive not kneeling, are none of the *Orders to be uſed*: But we think otherwiſe.

4. Some of them think, that [*Admitting none to the holy Communion, till they be Confirmed, or deſirous to be Confirmed,*] though it be the *very words*, is none of the *Orders* which they Conſent to uſe; (and we never knew any uſe it by any tryal of mens deſires:) But we think that nothing in the Book is intelligible, if ſuch plain paſſages are not.

5. Some of them by the words at Burial [*that thank God for taking to himſelf the Soul of this our dear Brother, out of the miſeries, &c.*) underſtand not his *Salvation*, but his going out of this World: But we think otherwiſe.

6. When only [*the unbaptized, ſelf murderers, and excommunicate*] are there excepted, ſome ſay, all others are meant that *ought to be excommunicate*; and ſo every Prieſt is made the Judge who *ſhould be Excommunicate*: But we think, that *Exceptio particularis firmat regulam in non exceptis.*

7. They think that the Words in the Canon [*that Nothing in the three Books is contrary to the Word of God,*]

God,] are meant with exceptions as to [*Nothing*] or to [*Contrariety*:] But we take [*Nothing*] for [*Nothing*,]and [*Contrary*] for [*Contrary*.]

8. Some of them ſay, that the *Church* being the Maker of theſe Impoſitions, we are to take them in the *Churches ſenſe*, which the Biſhops may ſignifie. But we think, that we muſt take them in the ſenſe of the King and Parliament, as the Law-makers; and that no Church or Biſhops can alter our Religion, or Articles, or Subſcriptions, by an Expoſitory Power.

9. Some of them think, that the words [*on any pretenſe whatſoever*] in the Subſcription, have *exceptions*: But we know not how any words can be more excluſive of exceptions.

10. Some of them think, that [*by any Commiſſioned*] is meant only [*Lawfully Commiſſioned*,] and ſo Subjects are left to judge of the *Lawfulneſs*: We find there no ſuch Limitation or Expoſition.

11. Some of them ſay, that by [*the Government of the Church*, not to be *altered*] is not meant the *Lay-Chancellors uſe of the Keys*: But we think, that *their actual Government* is the *Government actually*.

12. Some of them ſay, that by [*no change or alteration*] is meant only of the *Eſſence* of Epiſcopacy: We take [*no alteration*] for [*no alteration*.]

13. Some of them ſay, that by [*not endeavouring*] is meant only [not *ſeditiouſly*, or by ill means:] We think,

think, That *ubi LEX non distinguit, nam est distinguendum.*

14. Some of them think that no *Law or words imposed* must be expounded contrary to *Gods Law*, or any *former Law*, or to the *King's or Peoples rights*. But, 1. That is to suppose that men cannot contradict themselves or God, or do unjustly. 2. And then whatever Oaths men put on us we may take them, were the words never so false or impious, because the meaning must still be judged good.

15. Some say that we must put the best sense on imposed Oaths, and Covenants, and Subscriptions, that the words can be subdued to: We think that they must be taken in the sense of the Law-makers, which is to be judged of by the usual meaning of their words, unless themselves do otherwise expound them.

And so in many other Instances, the Conformists say that they would not Conform themselves, if they understood the words as we do.

Seeing then that all these worthy Conformists before mentioned do confess, that if the words of the Laws be properly to be understood, and not with their limitations, then the Conformists are in the wrong, and the Non-conformists in the right; we conclude with these few Questions.

Q. 1. Whether we owe not that honour to our Law-makers, as to suppose that they are able, and willing, to speak intelligibly?

Q. 2. Whe-

Q. 2. Whether they would have men left as to the Oath of Allegiance, and all other Oaths and Laws, to ſubdue the Law-makers words to any ſenſe that the Subject thinks lawful; and to make themſelves Judges of the ſenſe, by departing from the common uſe of the words, without proof that the Law-makers meant otherwiſe?

Q. 3. Whether there be need of much Learning, Conſcience, or Honeſty, to ſtretch the words from their ordinary ſenſe, more than to do otherwiſe? And whether ſo to do would deſerve honour and preferment, and to do otherwiſe be a Crime that deſerveth ſilencing, and ruine?

Q. 4. Whether their way of Expoſition, or ours, tend more to promote Perjury and Equivocation; and which more ſecureth Truth and Honeſty?

Q. 5. If once the Conſcience of Oaths and Covenants be relaxed, by ſtretching words to the takers intereſt, are not the Lives of Princes left in danger, and the Bonds of common Converſe looſened?

Q. 6. If this muſt be the cauſe of our ſufferings, and ſilence; is it not juſtice ſo to tell the World, and write it on our Croſs, that we are ſilenced and laid in Goals, becauſe we dare not take Oaths and Covenants, impoſed in Terms excluding limitations and exceptions, in a limited excepting ſenſe, without the Explication of the Law-makers?

Q. 7. And if we muſt be ſo uſed, whether any in the whole World be more unfit to ſilence, impriſon, fine, reproach, and ruine us, for miſ-underſtanding the words which we are to Subſcribe or Promiſe or Covenant in, (*viz.* for taking [*none*] to mean [*none*,] [nothing] to mean [*nothing*,] [*not any*] to mean [*not any*,] *contrary*] to mean [*contrary*,] [*all*] to mean [*all*,] than thoſe that while they are ſet to ruine us, will by no intreaties, after our almoſt fourteen Years ſufferings and expectations, be prevailed with to procure us an Expoſition of the ſenſe of any of theſe ſo much controverted words? We are more confident that the Law-makers can more certainly, and infallibly expound their own words, than the Pope or Council can expound Theological difficulties: And if our Accuſers will not once endeavour to procure them ſo to do, nor be intreated to conſent it, when Conformiſts and Non-conformiſts are chiefly diſagreed about the Interpretation of them; and when our preaching or ſilence, honour or reproach, maintenance or poverty, liberty or impriſonment, yea, and much *duty or ſin* in the Body of the Nation, lyeth upon the reſolution of this Controverſie, (what is the Law-makers meaning,) we will ſtill refer all to him that judgeth righteouſly, who will ſhortly finally end the Controverſie; praying to God, though Men will not hear us, *to open our Lips, that our Mouths may ſhew forth his praiſe*; that *he will make ſpeed to ſave us, and make haſte to help us*; that he, whoſe ſervice is perfect freedom, will defend us his humbled ſervants in all aſſaults of our Enemies, that we ſurely truſting in his defence, may not fear the power of any Adverſaries;

and

and that theſe evils which the craft and ſubtilty of the Devil or Man worketh againſt us be brought to nought, and by the providence of his goodneſs they may be diſperſed, that we his Servants being hurt by no perſecution, may evermore give him thanks in his holy Church; that in all our troubles we may put our whole truſt and confidence in his mercy, and evermore ſerve him in holineſs and pureneſs of living; that he will forgive our Enemies, Perſecutors, and Slanderers, and turn their hearts; eſpecially that he will ſave our Poſterity from their Curſe, who ſay, The Blood be on us, and on our Children. For we are not againſt ſuch a Liturgy as this.

POSTSCRIPT.

Reader,

IT was intended that a ſhort Account of the Nonconformiſts Judgement, about the *Power of Kings, and the Obedience of Subjects*, ſhould have been added; but by reaſon of ſome Mens aptneſs to be offended at all ſuch Publications, and becauſe of the preſent diſperſion of the Collectors, it is pretermitted, with this Profeſſion, That they ſhall at all times be ready to give ſuch Account of their Judgements, when Authority ſhall call them, or allow it, as ſhall ſatisfie all impartial Men, that they are haters of Diſloyalty, Sedition, Rebellion, and Schiſme.

FINIS.